JULY 2008
$4.99

EXCLUSIVE

POST-OP SIT-DOWN WITH SMOLTZ

chopTalk

THE OFFICIAL MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF THE ATLANTA BRAVES

PLUS

BENNETT'S EXTREME MAKEOVER

SWEET-SWINGING KELLY JOHNSON

JO-JO REYES' GAME PLAN

YUNEL ESCOBAR'S RANGE

TOP PROSPECTS LIST

...AND MUCH MORE!

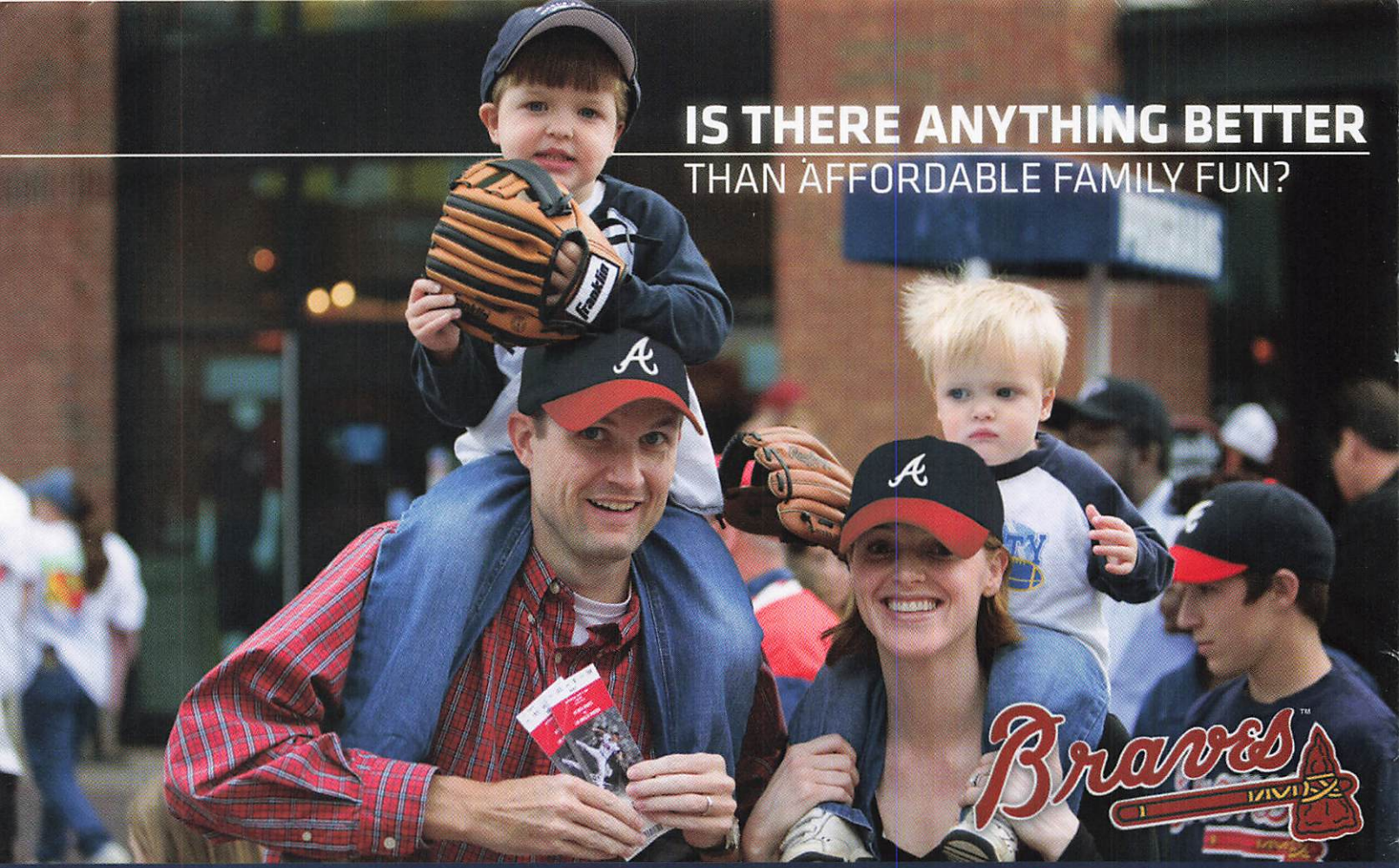
FIRST IN A SERIES ON THE 400/.400 MAN

CHIPPER!

In The Beginning

MOUND MAGICIAN

WHY HITTERS ARE BEWILDERED BY CAMPILLO'S SLEIGHT OF HAND



MVP
MOST VALUABLE PACKAGE

Five Atlanta attractions for only $89

- Braves game
- Stone Mountain
- Georgia Aquarium
- Six Flags over Georgia
- World of Coca Cola

Braves

Stone Mountain PARK

GEORGIA AQUARIUM

Six Flags OVER GEORGIA

World of Coca-Cola

braves.com/mvp

BUY ONE GET ONE FREE TICKETS

Tuesdays
- Coca Cola 2-for-1 Tuesday
- Buy One Get One FREE Upper Reserved tickets

Wednesday
- McDonald's Outfield Advantage
- 2-for-1 Outfield Pavilion Seats

Every Night
- 2-for-1 Upper Box tickets with College I.D., Military I.D., or AAA card

ampm ALL-YOU-CAN-EAT SEATS

Starting as low as $30 Ballpark Favorites

Upper Level
- Sun-Thur: $30 in advance
- Fri-Sat: $35 in advance
- Hot Dogs, Nachos, Peanuts, Popcorn and Fountain Drinks

Ballpark Favorites Plus

Lower Outfield
- Sun-Thur: $45 in advance
- Fri-Sat: $50 in advance
- Favorites, plus Hamburgers, Veggie Burgers, Fries, and Dessert

Barbeque & More

Golden Moon Casino Level
- Sun-Thur: $65 in advance
- Fri-Sat: $70 in advance
- Favorites, plus Pulled Pork, Chicken Wings, and Beer

MASTERCARD GRAND SLAM VALUE PLAN

Take the family to the Ballpark for $59

- 4 tickets
- 4 hot dogs
- 4 Cokes
- Parking pass
- Braves program

MasterCard GRAND SLAM TICKET PACK MLB.com

© 2008, Atlanta National League Baseball Club, Inc. All rights reserved. ™ The Braves script and tomahawk are trademarks of the Atlanta National League Baseball Club, Inc. All rights reserved.

1.800.326.4000 **braves.com/tickets**

BATTING ORDER

JULY 2008

POWER HITTERS

6-9
EXTREME MAKEOVER
How Jeff Bennett Lost Over 50 Pounds And Reshaped His Pitching Career
By Patty Rasmussen

20-21
PLAYING PEPPER
An Exclusive Post-Op Q&A With John Smoltz
By Patty Rasmussen

22-24
NICE & SMOOTH
Sweet-Swinging Kelly Johnson Keeps His Cool, Regardless of the Circumstances By Jay Busbee

25-27
MOUND MAGICIAN
Jorge Campillo Using Sleight of Hand To Deceive Bewildered Hitters By Ray Glier

28-31
CHIPPER THROUGH THE YEARS
Talent and Potential Were Unmistakable, But Challenges And Even Depression Intervened By Jon Cooper

30
STATISTICAL LOOK AT CHIPPER'S 400/.400 PACE

31
THE BUSINESS SIDE OF 400/.400
By Patty Rasmussen

37
ETA
Glavine Hopes Elbow Will Heal In Time For Return Around All-Star Break
By Mark Bowman of MLB.com

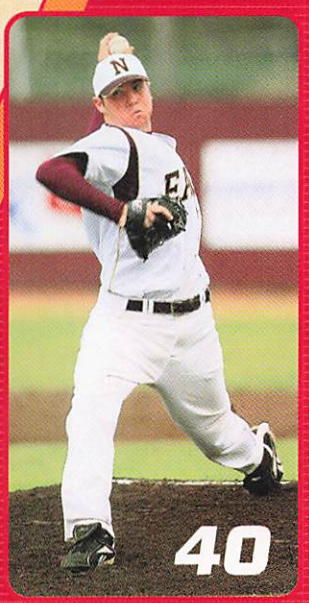
40-41
TOP PICK
Lefthander Brett DeVall Projects As Future Member of Starting Rotation
By Brian Knapp

41
A ROUND-BY-ROUND LOOK AT THE DRAFT

42
ARMS BUILDUP
Class of New Recruits Heavily Stocked With Pitching Talent By Brian Knapp

PAUL ABELL/ ATLANTA BRAVES

PAUL ABELL/ ATLANTA BRAVES



NORTHWEST FLORIDA DAILY NEWS

COVER CREDITS

CHIPPER JONES
by Paul Abell/Atlanta Braves

Jorge Campillo: Paul Abell/ Atlanta Braves

Design by Clark Odom

Chipper Watches Home Run No. 400

BATTING ORDER

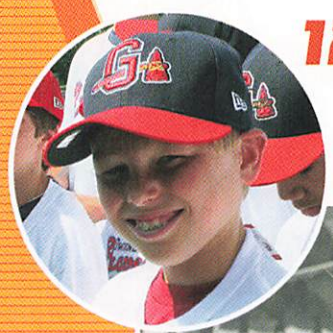
JULY 2008

SINGLES HITTERS

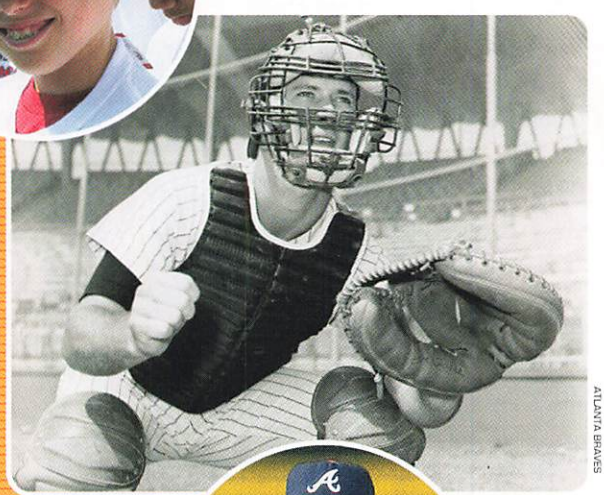
12-13 SCOREBOARD
14-15 BUNTS & BASEHITS
16-17 OFF THE FIELD
39 BEHIND THE NUMBERS By Steve Fall
54-55 HEROES & HISTORY
Bob Didier Helped Win '69 Division Title, Then Quickly Embarked On Diverse Path
By Brian Knapp
56 ALUMNI NOTES
58-59 BEYOND BASEBALL By Kim Hudson
60-61 TALKIN' CHOP
62 FAN AT LARGE By Dennis Byron

PITCHERS

11 PAINTING THE CORNERS By Jay Busbee
15 FRANK WREN
17 BOBBY COX
19 SKIP CARAY
24 BATTER UP! By Jo-Jo Reyes
27 AROUND BASEBALL
By Ken Rosenthal of FoxSports.com
57 GARY CARUSO
61 JOHNNY SAJEM'S Cartoon



12



54

ATLANTA BRAVES

PINCH-HITTERS

48-49 2008 SCHEDULE CALENDAR/TV LISTINGS
48 ROSTER
50-51 TICKETS, TURNER FIELD INFO
52 GAME BY GAME
53 INDIVIDUAL STATS
55 HOW I MADE IT TO THE MAJORS
By Steve Fall
56 BIRTHDAYS
62 FAN CLUBS GUIDE

39

ON DECK

43-46 FARM SYSTEM ROUNDUP By Bill Ballew
44 TOP PROSPECTS BY POSITION
45 DOWN ON THE FARM By Scott Diamond
47 FARM SYSTEM STATS

VOLUME 4, NUMBER 7

CHOPTALK USPS Periodicals Publication 022-732; ISSN 1555-1547 is published monthly for $37.95 per year ($56.95 Canada and Mexico; $76.95 other international; payment in U.S. dollars only) by Wonderdog Publishing, Inc.

Copyright 2008 with all rights reserved. Reproduction or use, without permission, of any content, in whole or part - in any manner - is prohibited.

Office of publication is located at 12829 Trinity Dr., Stafford, Tex. 77477-4214. Visit Braves.com/ChopTalk. E-mail Letters@ChopTalkonline.com. This is the Official Monthly Magazine of the Atlanta Braves. Single copy price is $4.99. Periodical postage paid at Stafford, Tex., and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Please send address changes and returns to: ChopTalk, P.O. Box 80750, Conyers, Ga. 30013-8750.

IS THERE ANYTHING BETTER

THAN GETTING MORE THAN JUST A GAME?

July Deals & Promotions

JULY 1 — PHILADELPHIA — TUESDAY 7:00 PM
7:00 PM
Coca-Cola 2-for-1 Tuesday
Buy One Get One FREE Tickets
All the fun for half the price

JULY 2 — PHILADELPHIA — WEDNESDAY 7:00 PM
7:00 PM
Tom Glavine T-Shirt Giveaway
Presented by Delta to the first 10,000 fans

JULY 3 — PHILADELPHIA — THURSDAY 7:00 PM
7:00 PM
Singles Night
Pre-game party and 2 complimentary drinks with ticket
Christmas in July
Toy Drive to benefit needy children

JULY 4 — HOUSTON — FRIDAY 7:30 PM
7:30 PM
4th of July Celebration
Publix Friday Night Fireworks
Spectacular post-game fireworks display

JULY 5 — HOUSTON — SATURDAY 7:00 PM
7:00 PM
College and Military Discounts
2-for-1 tickets with student or service I.D.

JULY 6 — HOUSTON — SUNDAY 1:30 PM
1:30 PM
All-Star Sunday
Kids get to run the bases after the last out
Alumni meet and greet

JULY 18 — WASHINGTON — FRIDAY 7:30 PM
7:30 PM
Publix Friday Night Fireworks
Spectacular post-game fireworks display

JULY 19 — WASHINGTON — SATURDAY 7:00 PM
7:00 PM
College and Military Discounts
2-for-1 tickets with student or service I.D.

JULY 20 — WASHINGTON — SUNDAY 1:30 PM
1:30 PM
All-Star Sunday
Kids get to take the field after the last out

JULY 28 — ST. LOUIS — MONDAY 7:00 PM
7:00 PM
MasterCard Grand Slam Value Plan
4 tickets, 4 hot dogs, 4 Cokes, parking pass and program starting at $59

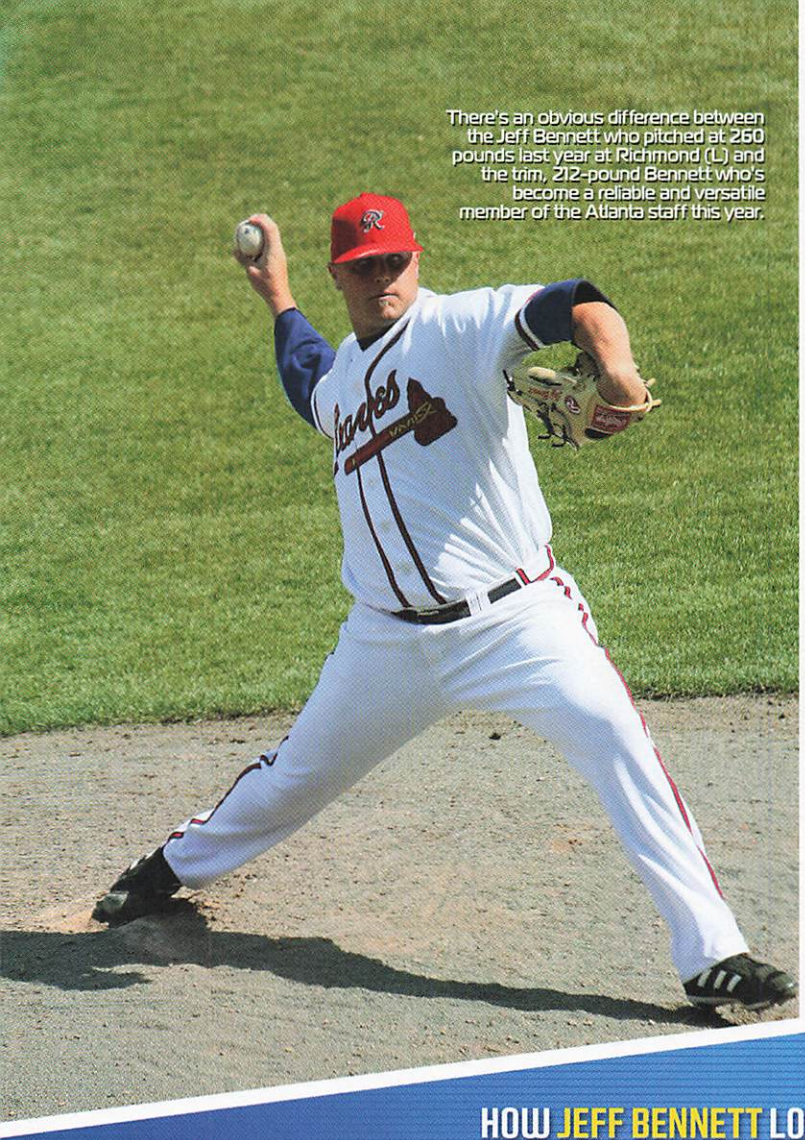
JULY 29 — ST. LOUIS — TUESDAY 7:00 PM
7:00 PM
Coca-Cola 2-for-1 Tuesday
Buy One Get One FREE tickets

JULY 30 — ST. LOUIS — WEDNESDAY 7:00 PM
7:00 PM
70's Throwback Hat Giveaway
Presented by NAPA to the first 10,000 fans

JULY 31 — ST. LOUIS — THURSDAY 7:00 PM
7:00 PM
Wild West Night
Experience the Wild West at Turner Field

© 2008. Atlanta National League Baseball Club, Inc. All rights reserved. ™ The Braves script and tomahawk are trademarks of the Atlanta National League Baseball Club, Inc. All rights reserved.

1.800.326.4000 **braves.com/tickets**



There's an obvious difference between the Jeff Bennett who pitched at 260 pounds last year at Richmond (L) and the trim, 212-pound Bennett who's become a reliable and versatile member of the Atlanta staff this year.

HOW JEFF BENNETT LOST OVER 50 POUNDS AND RESHAPED HIS PITCHING CAREER

EXTREME MAKEOVER BALLPLAYER EDITION

BY PATTY RASMUSSEN

It's one thing to lose a few pounds. It's quite another thing to change so dramatically that your boss doesn't recognize you.

But that's what happened to pitcher Jeff Bennett when he reported to Braves spring training in February. Bobby Cox prepared to introduce himself when Bennett reminded him that they'd already met the previous September!

"He didn't resemble his former self one bit," said Cox. "I just thought he was someone we'd invited in, a six-year free agent or something."

What a difference a year makes!

In July 2007, Bennett was pitching at Richmond, weighed about 260 pounds, and wore pants with a 40-inch waist. Just one year later, Bennett's a trim 212 pounds, has a 34-inch waist, and is a mainstay on the Atlanta pitching staff, serving as a middle and long reliever, as well as a valuable spot starter.

While his newfound fitness certainly helped him on the field, the 28-year-old Bennett says baseball wasn't the motivating force behind his remarkable makeover.

"When I was home for the International League All-Star break last July, I told my wife (Rachel) I wanted to get 'jacked' (in great shape)," he said. "She said, 'I'd like to see that,' but I took that to mean she thought I was fat!"

Needless to say, the conversation made an impression.

Bennett wasn't obese, but his weight had gradually increased due to age and lifestyle changes.

"When I was younger, I was always running, playing basketball, and could pretty much eat whatever I wanted to," he said. "When I stopped that, the pounds started adding up."

When he and Rachel married in 2003, they ate out a lot.

"Especially when we were in Arizona (2003 Arizona Fall League)," added Rachel. "We'd get Mexican food and then go out for ice cream. And I had two babies (Ali, now 3, and Elle, 1) during the past five years. I'd eat cake and ice cream, and Jeff would, too!"

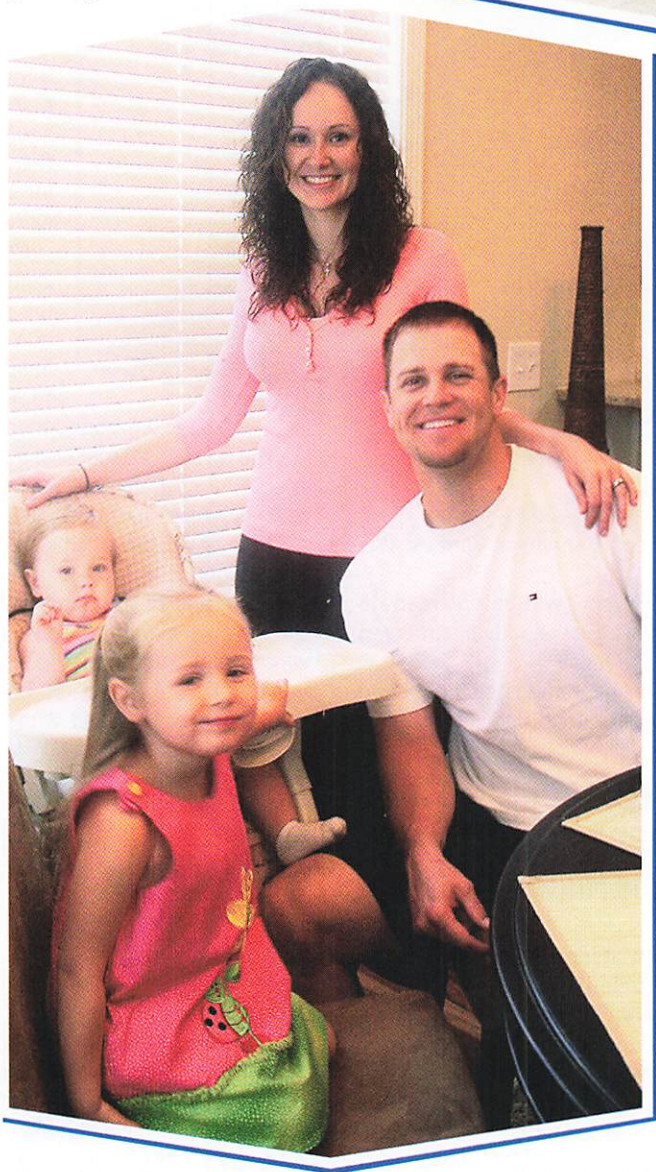
In addition to changes in metabolism and lifestyle, Bennett suffered a right elbow ligament tear in spring training 2006 after signing with the Braves as a minor league free agent. He underwent ligament replacement surgery and missed the entire season. Unable to work out to the extent he was used to, it was only natural that the pounds would pile up.

After his year-long rehab, Bennett started the 2007 season at Mississippi. He was promoted to Triple A April 22, and was a vital part of the Governor's Cup winning Richmond Braves, posting a 3-5 record, with a 3.35 ERA in 86 innings. As a starter, his record was 4-1 with a 1.74 ERA, and he allowed just five home runs. In the playoffs, he was 2-0 with a 1.04 ERA, earning a promotion to Atlanta where he was 2-1, 3.46 in late September.

Despite success on the field, Bennett knew he needed to get in better shape.

"Before the surgery, I was around 230 to 240. I threw hard and felt strong," he said. "But I was winded carrying Elle up the stairs."

PHOTOS: PATTY RASMUSSEN



Eating healthy is a priority for Jeff and Rachel and their daughters, 1-year-old Elle and 3-year-old Ali, also shown snacking on watermelon (above).

After the "ah-ha" moment during the mid-season break, Bennett immediately set weight-loss and fitness goals.

"I wanted to weigh 225, down from 260, by the end of the Triple-A season," he said. "That was my main goal."

Bennett committed himself to healthy eating habits and a vigorous, unique workout.

The first key to his physical transformation, especially in the early stages, was diet. With Rachel, Ali and Elle at home in Tennessee, Bennett took sole responsibility for what, how much, and when he ate.

"Diet was the thing I had to be most strict about. I cut out all the sweets," he said. "I made sure I got vegetables and the right amount of carbohydrates. I didn't count (calories), but I made sure I didn't overeat. I'd eat a protein shake made with milk in the morning. For lunch, I'd eat a sandwich from Subway, but I wouldn't have all the add-ons. There is healthy food out there. You have to take the time to find it and have the desire to find it."

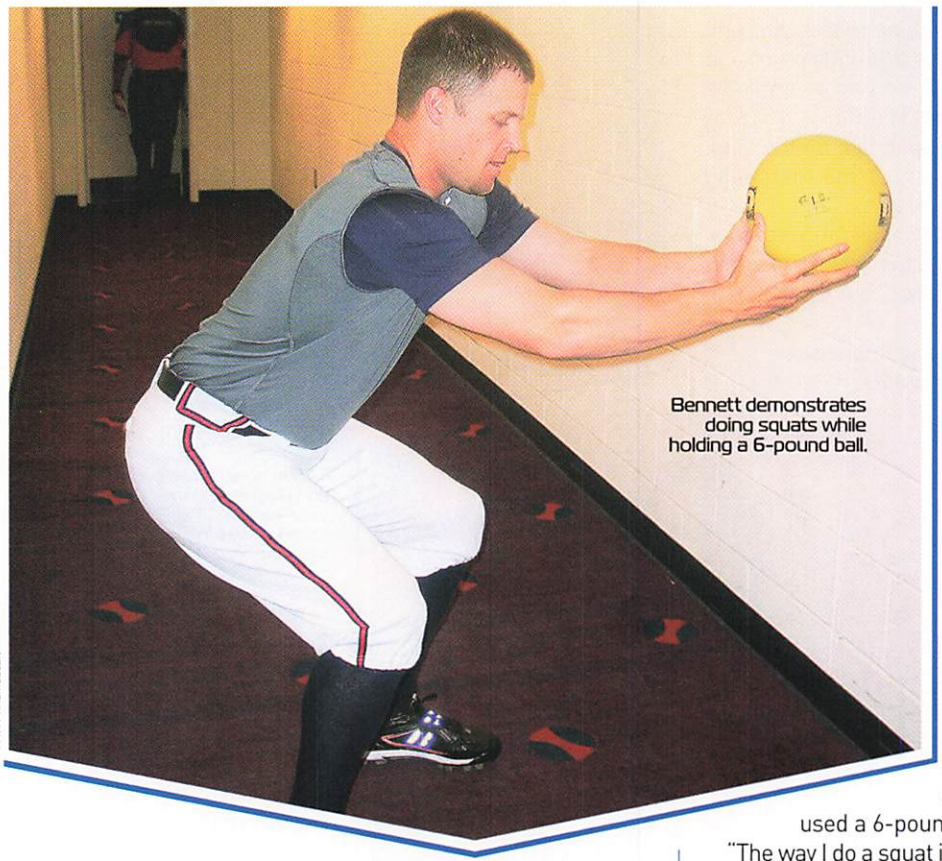
And Bennett had the desire.

"I drank a lot of water," he said. "It gave me the sensation of feeling 'full.'"

A steak lover, Bennett switched to lean chicken and fish.

Blaine Boyer, who pitched with Bennett at Richmond last year, remembered seeing Bennett go to the clubhouse kitchen between

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



Bennett demonstrates doing squats while holding a 6-pound ball.

PATTY RASMUSSEN

innings to have a spoonful of peanut butter.

"It helped curb my cravings for sweets," said Bennett.

Boyer laughed as he recalled seeing Bennett at FanFest this past January in Atlanta.

"I walked right by the dude," said Boyer. "I was getting ready to ask someone who in the world that was. He walked up to me and said, 'Hey, man,' I just about fell on the floor!"

That sort of reaction might not have happened had it not been for the second key to Bennett's program, total body fitness. For starters, he began running stadium steps. He performed the grueling workout every day, at Richmond and on the road.

"And the steps there (Richmond) aren't like the ones at Turner Field," he said. "They're steeper!"

Some teammates became participants, as well. After running the stairs, Bennett played soccer for about an hour with Manny Acosta, Iker Franco, Martin Prado and Brayan Pena.

"We'd go out and kick and run with a soccer ball," said Bennett. "It was a fun way to get in shape."

By the time Bennett was called up to Atlanta, Sept. 19, he'd already lost 35 pounds through the combination of diet and running. And that's where a conversation with Frank Fultz, former Braves strength and conditioning coach, came in.

"I asked Frank about military guys that you see who don't do a lot of workouts with weights," said Bennett. "They do pushups, pullups, situps, squats - basically body weight exercises. I asked if they're in such good shape doing that, then why couldn't a player do the same and get the same results. He agreed and said that's what he does for himself."

With encouragement from Fultz, Bennett began to incorporate those four body weight exercises into his running routine.

Bennett completed a circuit of exercises, five sets each of 15 pushups, 5 to 10 pullups, 25 crunches and 12 squats.

"I ended up losing a lot more fat, creating lean muscle, because of the intensity of what I was doing," said Bennett. "I'd do a set of pushups, then a set of pullups, then situps and then squats. While I was doing one thing, the other part would rest. I could work for 30 minutes and get a really good workout."

Proper technique was essential. Bennett did full pushups and performed the pullups in the hands forward position. The crunches were done with hands behind the head, elbows back and face looking straight up. Bennett used a 6-pound medicine ball while doing the squats.

"The way I do a squat is to make sure my feet are shoulder-width apart," he said, demonstrating. "I'd keep my back as straight as possible, make sure my knees didn't go over my toes, and I'd hold a weight or weighted ball in front of me to counteract while I squatted straight down, sort of like sitting down and back."

At the end of the season, Bennett and his family headed to Caracas, Venezuela, so that he could get in more pitching during winter ball. Although the political climate in Venezuela was unsettled, Bennett wanted Rachel and the girls with him.

"I spoke beforehand with the owner of the team, and they made it completely safe for us," he said. "We didn't feel unsafe at any time while we were down there. I'm glad I took my family. It was a great experience."

"PEOPLE WHO HAVE LOST A LOT OF WEIGHT WILL TELL YOU THAT THE FIRST 20 POUNDS IS THE EASIEST TO LOSE, BECAUSE YOU CAN DO THAT BY CHANGING YOUR DIET. BUT LOSING BODY FAT IS THE HARDEST TO GET OFF," BENNETT SAID. "I REMADE MY BODY TO LOOK TOTALLY DIFFERENT."

His weight was right around 230 pounds when he began winter ball, pitching for the Tiburones of La Guaira. He was happy with his progress, but he was looking to do more.

"People who have lost a lot of weight will tell you that the first 20 pounds is the easiest to lose, because you can do that by changing your diet. But losing body fat is the hardest to get off," he said. "I remade my body to look totally different."

Despite his love of fried plantains, which he confessed he ate almost every day, Bennett said he was able to eat pretty healthy in Venezuela.

"Their food is not cooked in as much fat. It's not processed," he said. "Down there, you mix good, healthy food with good lifestyle,

and all I was doing was working out and playing ball, and you're going to get results."

He continued doing his circuit of body weight exercises, and he continued to run the stadium steps.

"There were times when I had cops escorting me in the steps that were roped off that no one could get to because of the situation down there," he said.

The result was that he dropped his weight to 208 pounds, another 22 pounds from the start of the winter league season. In all, from July to December, Bennett lost 52 pounds.

He also managed to have a solid winter on the mound, finishing with a 3-3 record and a 3.09 ERA in 43 2/3 innings.

Most impressively, he's kept the pounds off.

"My weight fluctuates a lot," he said. "I was at 204 at one point, but my goal is to maintain around 205 and to cut my body fat down to about 8 percent."

Two months into the season, Bennett weighed 212 pounds. He still does his body weight exercises, though he's cut back on the number of reps.

"I'm at about three sets each of five pullups, 10 to 12 pushups and squats, and about 25 to 40 situps," he said. "It's worked great for me. I wish I had known about this when I was younger. Maybe the weight wouldn't have become an issue."

And he continues to walk the straight-and-narrow with his diet.

"It can be hard to maintain, because we do eat out a lot. But Rachel is great," he said. "My wife is a great cook. She's adaptable and cooks healthy meals."

One afternoon prior to Jeff heading to the ballpark, Rachel prepared boneless, skinless chicken breasts and rice. After spraying the heavy sauté pan with a canola oil cooking spray, she added and seasoned the meat.

"I always season the chicken with garlic powder and onion powder," said Rachel. "It adds a lot of flavor without having a heavy sauce."

She used chicken broth instead of water to cook the rice, which added flavor and cut down on fat normally added with butter. While she prepared their meal, Jeff, Ali and Elle enjoyed a snack of fresh watermelon.

"One of the most important things for Jeff at the start was portion control," said Rachel. "But if he's eating the right foods, and drinking a lot of water, he's satisfied."

Bennett said his workout routine can produce results for anyone willing to dedicate themselves to it, especially during the tough times.

"It was a very gradual thing," he said. "When I'd get to the top of the stairs, I'd think, 'Man, I want to quit this!' But I didn't, and the results have been worth it."

He doesn't believe the weight loss contributed to making the roster out of spring training, but conceded he is more flexible and agile than he used to be and that his pitching motion is shorter and more compact. Developing an effective sinker was another critical element in making the team.

Bennett said dropping close to 60 pounds created what many people would consider a great problem to have.

"I've had to buy clothes two different times," he said.

He opened some eyes, too.

"What I saw Jeff do is phenomenal," said Boyer. "He had a plan, and the only difference between him and everyone else with a plan is that he stuck with it."

"It's pretty funny, because everything we've read has said he lost the weight for baseball. But he's said he wasn't thinking about baseball when he started out," said Rachel. "It was, 'I want my wife to like the way I look.' I said, 'Gosh do you really think I'm that shallow? I love you regardless!' But he does look great. He's in better shape than when we got married."

Mission accomplished!

Bennett admits he's more flexible and agile this year with a 34-inch waist and has a more compact pitching motion than a year ago when he had a 40-inch waist.

PAUL ABELL/ATLANTA BRAVES

Corona Extra PRESENTS
KENNY CHESNEY'S POETS AND PIRATES TOUR 2008
STARRING KENNY CHESNEY
&
TUNDRA PRESENTS
BROOKS & DUNN
VERY SPECIAL APPEARANCE BY ROCK AND ROLL HALL OF FAMER SAMMY HAGAR
LEANN RIMES
GARY ALLAN
HOME OF THE BRAVES
TURNER FIELD
JULY 13
ON SALE NOW - Good seats still available!
Tickets at all ticketmaster outlets, www.ticketmaster.com
or charge by phone at 404-249-6400
TMG
AEG LIVE
EAGLE 106.7FM
101.5FM KICKS

PAINTING THE CORNERS

BY JAY BUSBEE

A HOT LINE CALL THAT'S NOT FROM MOSCOW

ANYONE IN A CERTAIN AGE range remembers when the term "Hot Line" originated. It was a Cold War-era telephone line that connected the White House directly to the Kremlin. It was designed for instantaneous communication between world powers, and it carried conversations that could shape the fate of nations.

Even though baseball doesn't exactly shape geopolitics, it has its own version of the Hot Line. Baseball's Hot Line runs from the major league general manager's office to the clubhouses of its top minor league clubs. And every time that phone rings, 25 players' heartbeats quicken, since whoever's on the other end of that line might just be calling somebody up to The Show.

Regular readers of this column know I don't have a whole lot of affection for the over-romanticizing of baseball, what with its green cathedrals and endless foul lines and whatnot. Sure, baseball is a metaphor for life, but heck, so is a sandwich. Sometimes, the game is just the game.

Like most sportswriters, I've seen enough dramatic moments on the playing field that it takes an awful lot to surprise or impress me. (Whether that's a good or a bad thing is a discussion for another day.)

But one aspect of baseball that never ceases to amaze me is that moment when a kid - or a grizzled 30-something lifetime minor leaguer - finally gets the call to come to the majors. It's a singular moment, a part of Americana that sports like basketball and football can't match. Ask any baseball player, and he can remember the circumstances of his callup, right down to the weather and time of day.

"Oh, man, absolutely," Blaine Boyer said with a grin when asked if he remembers the moment he first knew he was headed to Atlanta. "I was in Double-A Mississippi, and we were in Western Tennessee. I was sitting in the bullpen, and I saw it all unfold in front of me. The trainer came running out of the clubhouse to talk to Snit (then-manager Brian Snitker, now the Braves' third-base coach). Snit then went to (pitching coach) Kent Willis, who came over and told me, 'You're going to Atlanta.'"

And from there, things happened fast.

"I came in here," Boyer said, motioning around the Braves' locker room, "and the first guy I saw was John Smoltz. He came over and told me that Bobby (Cox) likes to get guys into a game in a hurry."

PAUL ABELL/ATLANTA BRAVES

Blaine Boyer remembers he was sitting in the Double-A Mississippi Braves bullpen when the Hot Line summoned him to Atlanta.

Sure enough, Boyer was called up June 12, 2005, and he made his first appearance that day against Oakland. He pitched one inning, and while he only gave up one run, it was enough to stick him with the loss. (Could have been worse: In John Smoltz's first game, he hit the first batter he ever faced, the Mets' Lenny Dykstra.)

Josh Anderson, one of the newest Braves, got his first taste of major league action in a September callup while with Houston last year. He failed to get a hit in his first seven games, but made up for it with a season-ending tear, hitting in 13 of the year's final 14 games.

"I had no idea how mentally tough you need to be to stay up here," said Anderson, who finally cracked Atlanta's roster on May 30, only to be sent down June 12. "Consistency, that's what I need to have to stay here."

Kelly Johnson could teach Anderson a thing or two about both mental toughness and consistency. When he got his callup in May 2005, he was at Richmond preparing to play in a day game. He'd just finished batting practice when that infamous phone rang. The trainer caught Johnson on the top steps of the dugout and told him, "You're out." With a quick round of handshakes and a fast stop by his apartment to pack, he was en route to Atlanta.

"I remember being so scared, I got here hours early," said Johnson, who debuted May 29, starting in left field and bating third. "My locker was way over there" - he points at the farthest corner of the Braves' clubhouse, an area reserved for just-passing-through rookies - "and even though I knew most of the guys from spring training, I was still more nervous than I could believe."

In his first game, Johnson walked and notched an RBI on a fielder's choice. Over the next three years, he got better.

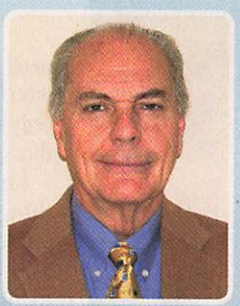
Baseball is a game that takes away far more than it gives. (With the notable exception of the paycheck, of course.) Twenty-nine teams finish the season as losers. No player in the game reaches base even half the times he comes to the plate.

> "ASK ANY BASEBALL PLAYER, AND HE CAN REMEMBER THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF HIS CALLUP, RIGHT DOWN TO THE WEATHER AND TIME OF DAY."

But every single player has that moment when the Hot Line phone rings, that moment when all of his dreams and his hard work pay off.

Most of us aren't lucky enough to have that one moment where it all comes together. So when we see someone who does - sorry, I'm about to get a little over-romantic myself here - is there anything else we can do but stand and cheer?

HEP, HEP, HOORAY!



A LOT OF PEOPLE get credit for the scouting and signing of Chipper Jones, but Braves Hall of Fame scout and executive Paul Snyder makes the case for someone who didn't receive that recognition.

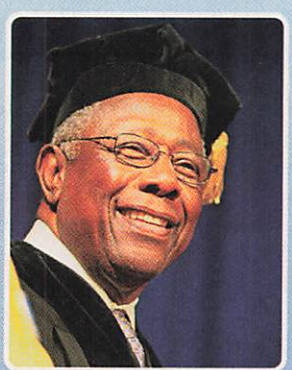
"The one thing that bothered me most about Chipper's signing, was the guy who turned in the first report for him hasn't gotten any credit for him - and that's "Hep" Cronin," said Snyder. "Even the area scout that had Florida for us at the time didn't have him turned in. Then Hep was working as a snowbird, going down there in the early spring. He was the guy that turned in the first report."

Harold "Hep" Cronin, a teacher and high school basketball coach, began his scouting career for Snyder in 1966 as an associate scout in the Cincinnati area, eventually working his way up to becoming a national supervisor in 2004. He also is credited with scouting and signing David Justice.

On May 12, Cronin, who scouted at every level, from the independent leagues to the majors, was named in the initial class of the Professional Baseball Scouts Hall of Fame, sponsored by the Topps Company. He will be honored with a baseball card and will have a bronze plaque unveiled in his honor by the St. Paul Saints Aug. 15.

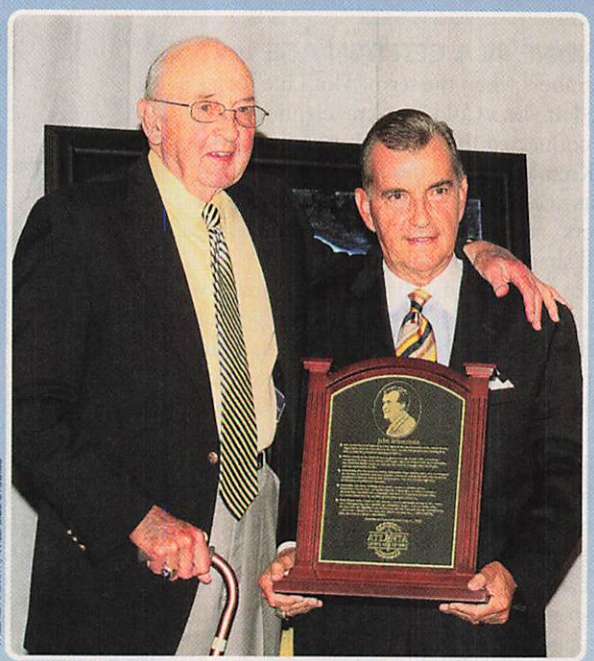
- JON COOPER

DR. AARON



CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY WISCONSIN

HANK AARON received an honorary doctor of laws degree from Concordia University Wisconsin May 17 and spoke to approximately 586 students at commencement. In 1995, he received an honorary degree from Emory University in Atlanta and also delivered the commencement address at Harvard.



VALERIE A. SMITH/WILD SIDE STUDIOS

Ernie Johnson (L) welcomes John Schuerholz into the Atlanta Sports Hall of Fame.

THE PREZ

THE 1991-2005 playoff-dynasty Braves gained another honor May 31 when the Atlanta Sports Hall of Fame inducted John Schuerholz, Braves president and former general manager, in its fourth class during a banquet at Emory Conference Center & Hotel.

Schuerholz received the honor for shaping the Braves teams that won 14 straight division titles. He was inducted alongside a host of Atlanta sports luminaries, including former Falcons Steve Bartkowski and Claude Humphrey, NASCAR driver Bill Elliott, Olympic hurdler Edwin Moses, and LPGA founder Louise Suggs. Hank Aaron, Phil Niekro, Bobby Cox, Dale Murphy and Ernie Johnson are already members of the Hall.

"I'm not sure what qualifies me to be up here," Schuerholz said with a smile as he motioned at the other inductees. "My father was a great athlete, but all he passed down to me was his height."

Schuerholz shared the credit for his honor, saying, "This is a team effort. It's always been a team effort. I am deeply honored to accept this award, but I wouldn't be up here without the team I had around me."

- JAY BUSBEE

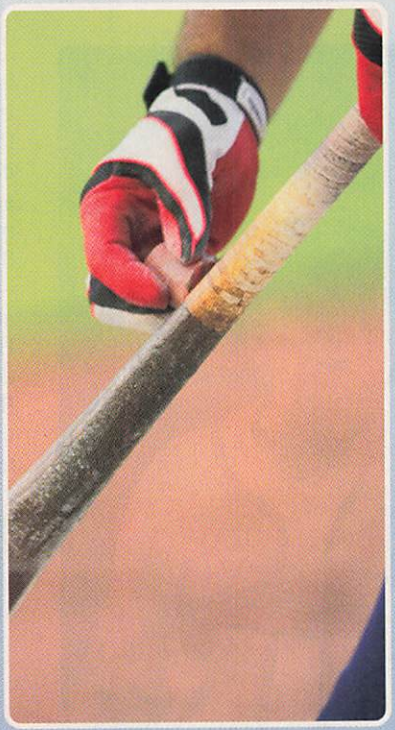
WHAT IS THAT?

PINE TAR

TO CONNECT with pitches that travel over 90 miles per hour and break instantly, Braves hitters need a firm grip on the bat. A substance called pine tar helps make that possible.

Pine tar is harvested from American pine trees grown all over the country. It comes from the sticky sap of those trees. Besides its use in baseball, pine tar is utilized by horse trainers for hoof care, and it's also a wood preservative.

Pure pine tar is very thick. So, companies like Tanners Inc., which manufacturers Rawlings baseball accessories, warm the substance in order to liquefy it. This allows it to be poured into bottles and other packages for distribution and sale, according to general manager Vince Signorelli of Tanners.



ATLANTA BRAVES

While some forms of pine tar are blended with alcohol and/or turpentine to further liquefy the substance, baseball players prefer it without the added ingredients.

Pine tar is delivered to the Braves clubhouse at Turner Field in pint cans. Bill Acree, the Braves' director of team travel and equipment manager, explains how the clubhouse attendants create their own pine tar rags and sticks (L) for game use.

"We make pine tar rags out of old towels," said Acree. "We use tape on the back and sides of the towel, and then we soak the exposed side with the pine tar."

While waiting in the on-deck circle, Braves hitters rub the rag or smaller stick against the bat handle to make it sticky. That gives them a sure grip and helps to prevent the bat from slipping out of their hands when they swing.

- STEVE FALL

GIMME A 'G'

PHOTOS: PAUL ABELL/ATLANTA BRAVES

THE GWINNETT BRAVES are approximately nine months from taking the field in suburban Atlanta, but the franchise's new Triple-A affiliate took two big steps in that direction the first week in June. The Gwinnett Braves logo and home uniform were unveiled June 2 at the Pinckneyville Park baseball fields in Norcross. Then on June 3, the Gwinnett Convention and Visitors Bureau hosted a groundbreaking ceremony in Lawrenceville, with John Schuerholz and Pat O'Conner, president of Minor League Baseball, among the speakers.

The home uniform features a white body with red and navy blue piping down the front, red sleeves with navy blue piping, and the familiar scripted Braves across the chest with the word Gwinnett underneath.

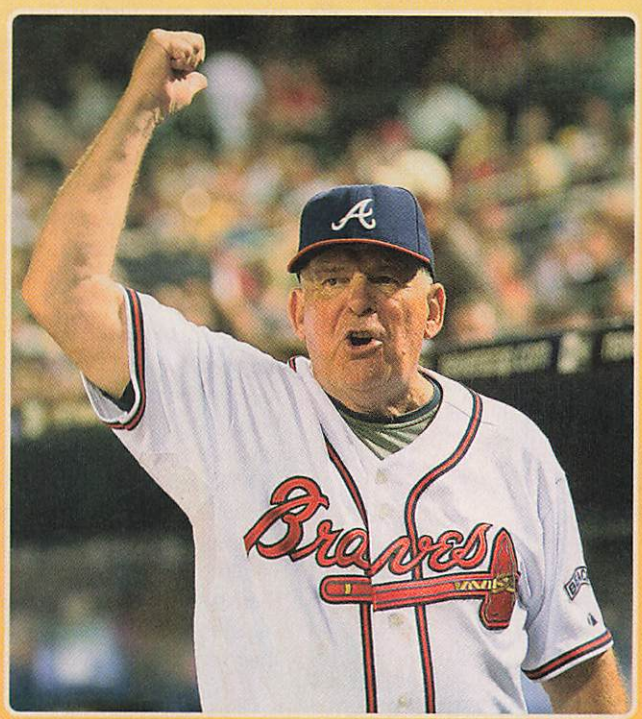
There will be three different team caps. The home cap (below) will be navy blue with a red brim and a red "G" with a tomahawk through it. The away cap is entirely navy blue with a white "G" and red tomahawk. The batting practice cap is all red with navy blue letters "G" and "B" and a red tomahawk.

The Gwinnett team logo features the well-known scripted "Braves" with tomahawk and the word Gwinnett above it.

Gwinnett Braves merchandise can be purchased by calling the Braves Catalog at 1-800-433-BRAVES, at the Braves Clubhouse Store at CNN Center, and at merchandise counters at Turner Field. Visit gwinnettbraves.com for more information.

The Braves will move their Triple-A affiliate from Richmond to Gwinnett County to start the 2009 season. Seating capacity at the new stadium will be over 10,000, including more than 2,000 seats on a grass berm.

BOBBY'S BACK



PAUL ABELL/ATLANTA BRAVES

SPECULATION about this being **Bobby Cox**'s last season as Braves manager ended May 23 when the team announced he signed a one-year extension through the 2009 season. Cox, who turned 67 two days prior to the announcement, is in his 27th season as a major league manager and his 23rd as manager of the Braves (includes first stint of 1978-81).

Besides being the winningest manager in franchise history, Cox ranks fourth all-time, trailing only Hall of Famers **Connie Mack** and **John McGraw** and the Cardinals' **Tony La Russa**. Under Cox, the Braves have the best cumulative won-loss record in the majors from 1991-present. He's led the Braves to 66 post-season wins, second all-time, along with 14 division titles, five National League pennants, and the 1995 World Series championship. He's been named Manager of the Year four times by the Baseball Writers Association of America and eight times by The Sporting News.

There's no doubt that Bobby Cox still has the passion for the game that's helped make him the most-successful manager in Braves franchise history.

ON THE MOVE

The Braves' staggering rash of injuries has led to a host of player transaction, including:

Chuck James was optioned to Richmond May 16, and right-handed reliever **Phil Stockman** was called up to take his spot. **Brayan Pena** was activated from the disabled list May 23 and designated for assignment. He was picked up off waivers by the Royals, who sent him to Triple-A Omaha. On May 26, **Buddy Carlyle** was activated from the disabled list, and **Chris Resop** was designated for assignment.

Matt Diaz (knee) was placed on the DL May 28, and **Rafael Soriano** was activated from the DL. On May 30, **Mark Kotsay** (back) was disabled, retroactive to May 26, and outfielder **Josh Anderson** was called up from Richmond.

John Smoltz was activated from the DL June 2, and Stockman was optioned back to Richmond. Two days later, Smoltz was put back on the DL and Stockman was summoned back from Triple A.

On June 10, **Tom Glavine** was disabled (elbow, small tear in flexor tendon), and the next day, Anderson was sent back to Richmond and outfielder **Brandon Jones** and lefty reliever **Jeff Ridgway** were recalled from Richmond.

The contract of righthander **Charlie Morton** was purchased from Richmond June 14 so he could start that night at Anaheim, and Soriano was put back on the DL (retroactive to June 6) with continued elbow soreness. **Mike Gonzalez**, out since last May 16 for elbow surgery, was activated June 18, and Stockman was optioned back to Triple A.

THE CHIPPER BEAT

Chipper Jones found out the hard way that Friday, the 13th, is nothing to laugh about. Taking a routine round of batting practice at Anaheim on Friday, June 13, he was struck just below the right eye with a ball that ricocheted off the metal bar across the top of the batting cage. He was helped to his feet by teammates and walked off somewhat dazed to the clubhouse under his own power. He missed that game to have his eye examined, but returned the next evening and sported a shiner for a few days.

Chipper was named the National League Player of the Week for June 2-8. He led the NL with a .579 (11-19) batting average, a 1.105 slugging percentage, and a .652 on-base percentage during that period, and his 11 hits tied for the league-lead. He had three home runs, a double, six RBIs and four runs scored.

On June 3 vs. Florida, Chipper hit his 399th career home run and had a single to move into second place on the Braves' all-time hit list with 2,202, passing Hall of Famer **Eddie Mathews**. He then hit his 400th home run on June 5 vs. Florida and went 4-for-5 in the game. Jones had at least one hit in each of his five games for the week, recording four multi-hit games and two multi-RBI performances.

Tourneau will award Chipper with a luxury Swiss timepiece, suitably engraved, in recognition of being Bank of America Presents the National League Player of the Week.

LEFT OUT

Starting leftfielder **Matt Diaz** was lost for four to six weeks when he sustained a partial tear in the posterior cruciate ligament in his left knee May 27 at Milwaukee. He was injured sliding into the wall along the left-

field line trying to catch a foul ball hit by **Prince Fielder**. No surgery was required, but Diaz was fitted with a knee brace to restrict movement while the knee heals. **Greg Norton** and **Brandon Jones** were getting most of the playing time in left, and **Gregor Blanco** was filling in for **Mark Kotsay** in center. Kotsay was recovering from a back sprain.

SHORT HOPS

- **Jeff Francoeur**'s major league leading consecutive games played streak ended at 370 (all starts dating to Oct. 1, 2005) May 20 when **Bobby Cox** gave him a night off with his average down to .258.

- **Jair Jurrjens** missed his June 11 start after spraining his ankle the previous day when he slipped and fell down some stairs at Wrigley Field.

- **Yunel Escobar** hit his first career walkoff home run June 2 to beat Florida, 7-5, at Turner Field. It came exactly one year from the date of his major league debut when he delivered a game-winning double to beat the Cubs, 5-3.

- **Phil Falco** replaced **Frank Fultz** as the Braves' strength and conditioning coach June 5. Fultz, who held the position since 1992, resigned. Falco had been the organization's minor league strength and conditioning instructor since 2003.

- **Tom Glavine** gave up the first grand slam of his career May 25 against Arizona's **Eric Byrnes**.

- **Chipper Jones** joined Hall of Famers **Hank Aaron** and **Eddie Mathews** as the only Braves to hit 400 or more career home runs June 5. He's also only the third switch-hitter in history to hit as many as 400 homers - Hall of Famers **Mickey Mantle** (536) and **Eddie Murray** (504).

- The Braves signed veteran right-handed reliever **Jorge Julio** to a minor-league contract June 13 and assigned him to Richmond. The hard-throwing 29-year-old was released by Cleveland at the end of May with a 5.60 ERA in 15 games. However, he has 99 career saves (131 opportunities), including 83 as Baltimore's closer from 2002-04.

FRANK WREN
GENERAL MANAGER

WE MAY BE WATCHING OUR ROTATION OF THE FUTURE

AS I WRITE THIS, it looks like we're starting to get back some of the many players we've lost to injury this season and over the past year. Mike Gonzalez will join the team in Texas and is ready to be activated in the next couple of days.

Mike Hampton will throw two innings in a simulated game tomorrow in Florida, and Anthony Lerew will throw three innings for the other team in the simulated game. Those two are progressing well.

I don't really see Lerew in the major league picture for the rest of the year, but if he pitches good enough in the minors, who knows.

Gonzalez pitched twice over the weekend at Richmond and threw very well. He got his first save. We're talking about a guy who's had his adrenaline flowing in major league save situations who's pitching in the middle of a minor league rehab. It's tough for him to get it going. But he's very close to his old stuff, and with the adrenaline of being back in the majors factored in, I think we'll see him ratchet it up. Even in more serene conditions, his stuff is looking plenty good.

Tom Glavine is a few weeks away, but we think he'll be ready to return some time around the All-Star break.

John Smoltz is out for the season, but I think he's encouraged about his chances now that he's in the post-op stages. We all just have to wait and see. We won't have a good sense of what will happen for a few months. It's four months before he can throw.

As he starts to progress, we'll know more about him coming back. We're certainly all very hopeful that he can do it.

Rafael Soriano is still somewhat of a mystery. We don't know the exact cause of his discomfort, and all the tests have come back fairly normal. There are always some unknowns with guys who have had reconstructive surgery on their arms, because an MRI isn't as conclusive due to the scar tissue from the surgery.

> "THIS ROTATION WE HAVE NOW - HUDSON, JURRJENS, REYES, CAMPILLO AND MORTON - CONSISTS OF FIVE REAL TALENTED GUYS."

Of course, to top off all the pitching injuries, one of our healthy starters (Jair Jurrjens) tripped on the steps at Wrigley Field and twisted his ankle. He's fine now, but he had to miss one start. And Tim Hudson got dehydrated in Chicago.

It's been a tough road trip - one thing after another, like the ball off the top of the batting cage that hit Chipper in Anaheim.

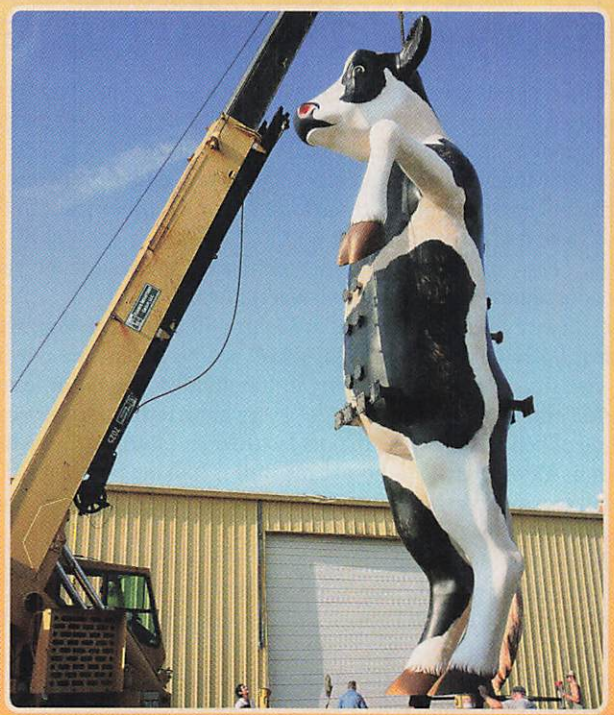
Matt Diaz is still several weeks away, waiting for his ligament to heal. But he is doing well in rehab. He's in a waiting mode but should be back sometime in July.

Mark Kotsay is progressing slowly and is taking on more and more activity every day. It's not as quick as we'd all like, but there's no way to speed it up. He just woke up one day and it was stiff and got progressively stiffer the next few days. We don't know what caused it. I saw a similar situation with Cal Ripken in Baltimore. It's about a month-long process.

This rotation we have now - Hudson, Jurrjens, Jo-Jo Reyes, Jorge Campillo and Charlie Morton - consists of five real talented guys. I think we're looking at our rotation of the future in many respects. It's the way we've been pointing.

There were some comments made over the weekend that we didn't want to bring Morton up this early, but nothing could be further from the truth. We've been looking for a spot for him for about three weeks. Our staff in the minors told us he was ready whenever we had the need. He handled himself very well in his first start, and we're very comfortable with the way he's progressed over the past year.

Plus, Jo-Jo continues to get more and more comfortable at the major league level and show the kind of pitcher he can become.


KERN STUDIOS

BIG BEEF

TURNER FIELD has a new full-time resident, and field director **Ed Mangan** better make sure it doesn't get to the outfield grass. On June 20, Atlanta-based Chick-fil-A introduced a 40-foot tall, 15,000-pound tomahawk-chopping mechanical cow that sits atop the 755 Club in left field. Made of fiberglass and steel, the cow has its own Braves cap and a signboard that reads, "Du Tha Chop. Eat Tha Chikin."

S. Truett Cathy, founder and CEO of Chick-fil-A, along with **Rachel** and **Melody Snelen**, winners of Chick-fil-A's "Biggest Fan" nationwide video contest, activated the cow prior to the June 20 game. Chick-fil-A recently opened two restaurants inside Turner Field – located at Gates 139 and 329.

The cow was produced by Kern Studios, a New Orleans company well known for building Mardi Gras floats. It actually was made in Spain and shipped to New Orleans where it was completed and driven by truck to Atlanta.

The Chick-fil-A cow is located between the giant Coca-Cola bottle and the out-of-town scoreboard - not that anyone could miss it!

BEST DRESSED

Braves players and **Bobby Cox** took the jerseys off their backs on June 7, raising $18,000 for several organizations including the Norcross High School Dugout Club, the Brain Tumor Foundation for Children, March of Dimes, Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, Special Olympics of Georgia, and the Atlanta Braves Foundation. Volunteers sold scratch-off tickets to fans on June 5-7, and winners took part in the post-game "Jerseys Off Our Backs" ceremony. Winning fans were able to go on the field to receive the game-worn jerseys directly from the players.

SALUTE

The Braves paid tribute to **James "Red" Moore**, one of the best fielding first basemen in the Negro Leagues, when former Negro Leagues players were honored before the start of the Major League Baseball First-Year Player Draft on June 5. Each club selected a player who never had a chance to play in the majors. Moore was born in Atlanta in 1916 and played in the Negro Leagues from 1936-40. He made three all-star teams, played on three second-half championship teams, and was selected to the 1938 Southern News Services All-American Negro League Baseball Team.

OUTDOOR PARTY

Fans were to gather at Smyrna Market Village on the afternoon of June 28, to watch the SportSouth telecast of the Braves' game at Toronto on two giant outdoor screens. This free event, presented by 640 WGST, 94.9 The Bull, FSN South, SportSouth, Atkins Park Tavern, City of Smyrna and XL Video, was to include appearances by former Braves players, the Braves Tomahawk Team and Heavy Hitters Drumline, inflatable baseball skills games, prizes and giveaways.

The Braves Radio Network pre-game show, hosted by **Mitch Evans** and former Braves second baseman **Mark Lemke**, was to originate from Atkins Park Tavern.

A GOOD READ

The Braves, FSN South and Comcast Cable teamed for the FSN Reading All Stars literacy initiative, featuring a book reading event for young fans before the game on May 21. The Road to the Braves Reading Corner was hosted by **Tim Hudson**, who read an excerpt from the FSN Reading All Stars book, The Road to the Braves. A question-and-answer session followed. Books were distributed to the first 500 children in attendance, and the first 100 received a copy signed by Hudson. The Road to the Braves is about a boy from Atlanta who strives to make it into the major leagues. The FSN Reading All Stars literacy initiative is a nationwide public service campaign that fosters interest in reading among kids who might not ordinarily pick up a book.

MAKE A DATE

The Braves are planning special activities for single fans at the games of July 3 (Phillies) and Sept. 4 (Nationals). The purchase of a $25 ticket includes a seat in the special Singles' Night section in the Golden Moon Casino Pavilion ($28 value), admission to the Singles' Night Pre-Game Party, and two complimentary drinks (soda, beer, wine or margarita). Fans can purchase tickets at braves.com/singles. The Singles' Night Pre-Game Parties begin at 5:30 p.m. in the

Golden Moon Casino Patio at the Top of the Chop. Festivities include a live DJ, prizes, and several of the most eligible bachelors and bachelorettes in the Southeast.

BALLS & STRIKES

- The Georgia Writers Association nominated **Walter Victor** for its Georgia Author of the Year for his book Brave at Heart: The Life and Lens of Atlanta Braves Photographer Walter Victor.

- **Frank Wren** gave a presentation to the DeKalb County Chamber of Commerce in June titled "An In-Depth Analysis: Operating a Major League Baseball Team."

- **Justin Hayes**, a 25-year-old man from Cumming, Ga., fell to his death at Turner Field May 21. He fell from the club level to the field level concourse.

- **Jake Murphy**, 18-year-old son of Braves Hall of Famer **Dale Murphy**, took batting practice with the Braves May 17. A third baseman and wide receiver at American Fork High School in Utah, he's signed a letter-of-intent to play football at Brigham Young.

- The Braves joined with the Prostate Cancer Foundation and Radiotherapy Clinics of Georgia on June 4, to help raise awareness and funds for prostate cancer research. The Prostate Cancer Foundation's 12th Annual Home Run Challenge, a partnership between the Prostate Cancer Foundation (PCF), Major League Baseball (MLB), and the Major League Baseball Players Association (MLBPA), took place the 10 days leading up to Father's Day to help raise crucial funds for prostate cancer research. **Bobby Cox** and **Chipper Jones** participated in pre-game ceremonies as part of the campaign.

- Almost 600 dogs and 1,000 fans took part in another soldout Bark in the Park at Turner Field May 18.

- The remaining Power Lunches of the season are scheduled July 31, Aug. 15 and Sept. 11 at Maggiano's in Buckhead (3368 Peachtree Rd.). Tickets are $35, and proceeds benefit the Braves Foundation. Order tickets by calling (404) 614-1370 or visit braves.com/powerlunch.

WE HAVE TO PUT LOSSES BEHIND US AND MOVE ON

ANY WAY YOU LOOK AT IT, losing John Smoltz is huge. We had a lot of depth in our pitching. We made sure we pulled that together this past winter, and it's already paid off. But losing John... The way he was throwing early this year, he was going to be the Cy Young, leading the league in strikeouts, and the whole ball of wax.

But John had so much pain in his shoulder that he couldn't lift his arm the next day. He hasn't been able to sleep, drive or do anything without pain. His shoulder throbbed 24 hours a day.

Knowing John as the competitor that he is, he's going to try to (come back) if his shoulder isn't too bad. If there's a chance - at all - that he can pitch, he wants to take it. He told them to do whatever they had to do. If what they wound up doing is career ending, he told them to go ahead and do it. It comes down to the quality of life.

I know what he's going through. My left shoulder is as bad as his. I can't even lay on it at night, and driving home late at night with the seatbelt barely touching it is agonizing. The least little pressure drives me nuts, so I understand how he feels. It was time for him to do something.

I brought John to the Braves when I was the general manager in 1987. It's been my lucky fortune to manage a guy like him. I've had a lot of good luck with outstanding guys, and John's one of them. John Hageman and Paul Snyder are the ones who dug him out of the (scouting) reports, and he was a great find.

The story of the first half has to be Chipper Jones. He's incredibly locked in and focused, and he's loving every minute of it. He's got a lot of energy.

> "I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYONE DURING MY CAREER HITTING LIKE THIS, AND I SAW GEORGE BRETT AND TONY GWYNN."

He's been one of the really bright spots, not just for the Braves but throughout baseball. He's creating a lot of buzz. He passed one of his childhood idols, Dale Murphy, on the all-time home run list when he got that 400th home run. I was fortunate enough to manage both of them.

You know, Chipper's been a great hitter every year. Last year he was second in the league in hitting, so it's not a surprise that he's hitting really great. But if you were to pick out a player in all of major league baseball and that guy still is hitting .420 in the middle of June, I don't think you could pick anybody, to be honest. It's that hard to do.

I've never seen anyone during my career hitting like this, and I saw George Brett and Tony Gwynn. They were great hitters, too, but neither of them did it this late.

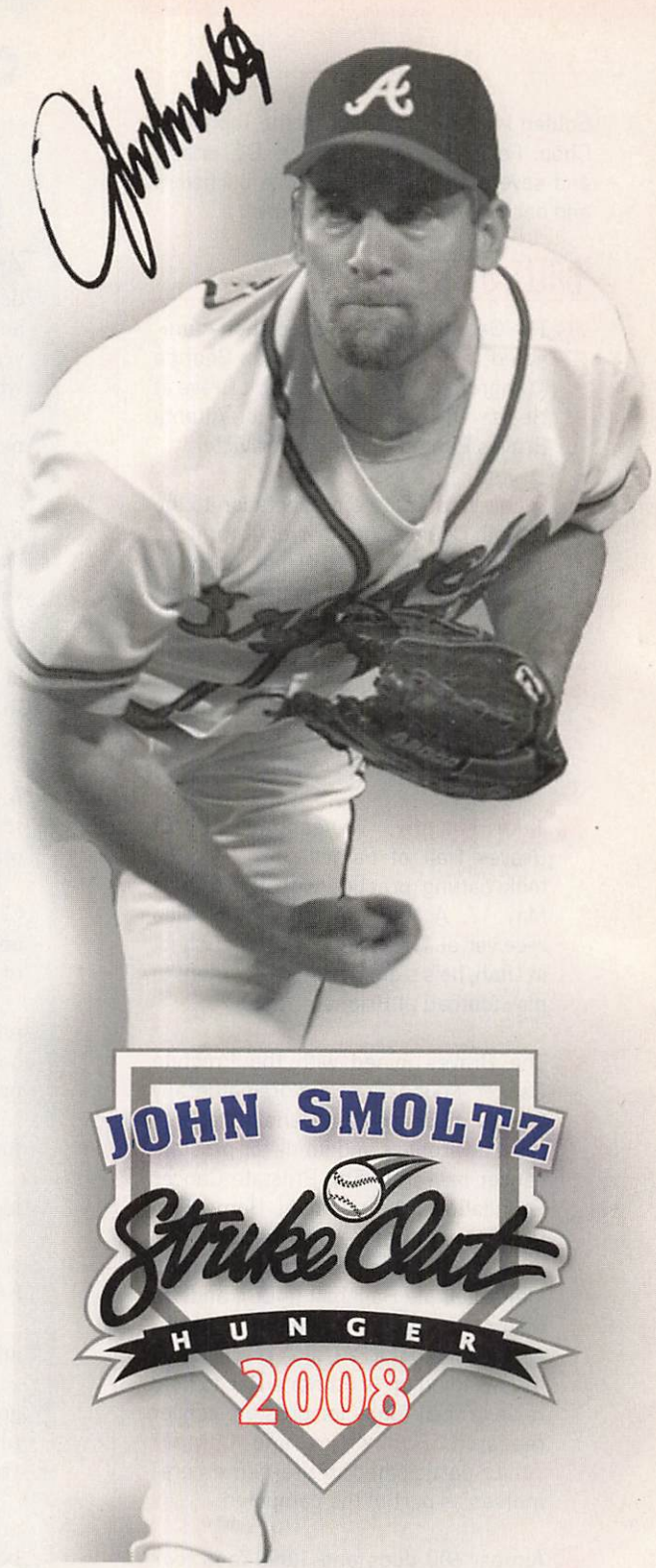
Chipper works hard at hitting. His success doesn't happen by accident. He's got a great memory. He watches and studies during the game and watches film. Our team is fortunate to have a position player like him to help our younger players. He's an all-around guy.

I don't have any answers to questions about the number of one-run losses and road losses. They aren't any different than any other loss. But you have to bounce back. It's a cliché, but you can gain strength from it. You have to learn to shake it off. You'd better, or you're not going to last long in this game, as a manager or a player.

There's a lot that goes into any loss, but the fact is you have to score runs. You can't leave guys on base. You keep it all in perspective, remember the wins, move on from the losses, and don't try to read too much into them.

Our pitching has been good despite the weird injuries that have happened. Our bullpen has worked hard and has done everything we asked. Mike Gonzalez looks good, and we look forward to his return.

Strike Out Hunger!



SEND IN YOUR DONATION TODAY.

Atlanta Braves pitcher John Smoltz knows it's important to build a better community. That's why John is helping the Atlanta Community Food Bank strike out hunger. We need your help too! You can help Georgians in need by joining John's Strike Out Hunger team. John is donating $200 to the Food Bank for every strikeout this season. And you can receive a sports item autographed by John for every pledge YOU make. As a special thank you for your donation and support, each paid pledge will receive a gift based on the pledge levels shown below. All gifts are tax deductible less the retail value of the item(s) received. All gifts will be autographed by John Smoltz.

Yes!

I will pledge $_____

Signed Gear		Total
Limited Edition Photograph	$ 25 ___	$___
Baseball Cap	$ 75 ___	$___
Baseball	$ 150 ___	$___
Official Bat	$ 400 ___	$___
Official Glove	$ 500 ___	$___
Official Smoltz Braves Jersey	$1000___	$___
All items are	$2150___	$___

Name:_____

Address:_____

City:_____ State:_____ Zip:_____

Phone:_____

The Strike Out Hunger season begins with the Braves opening home game and ends with the final regular season home game. All items based on availability and will be sent to you at the close of the Braves season and upon receipt of payment.

For more information call 404-892-FEED ext.1246. Or visit ACFB.org

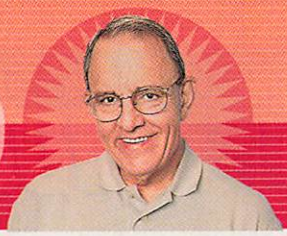
Pledge forms should be mailed to Atlanta Community Food Bank, 732 Joseph E. Lowery Blvd. NW, Atlanta, GA 30318-6628

Please make checks payable to Atlanta Community Food Bank.

ATLANTA COMMUNITY FOOD BANK

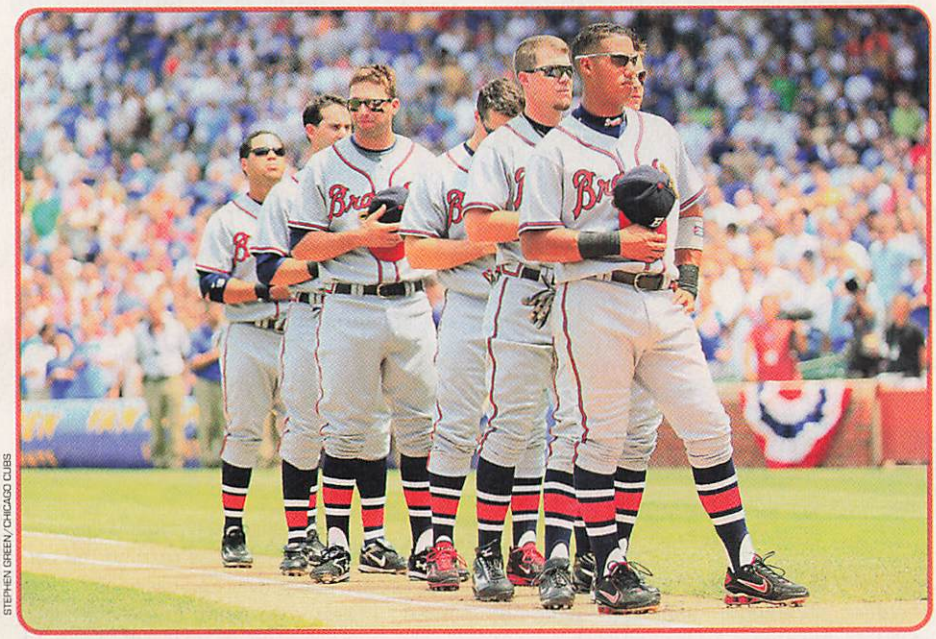
Nourishing stronger communities.

SKIP



CARAY CORNER

DON'T TOSS OUT THE THROWBACK UNIFORMS!



STEPHEN GREEN/CHICAGO CUBS

The Braves showed some serious socks when they wore 1948 uniforms for the June 12 "throwback" game against the Cubs at Wrigley Field.

THE BRAVES played a game in Chicago June 12 that was billed as "turn back the clock day." Both teams played the game wearing uniforms designed like the uniform players wore in 1948.

Watching the game on television, I was struck by how, at least in my opinion, those uniforms were far better looking than the ones our team wears today. The striped socks were neat, and the uniform itself is great looking.

I hope the powers that be noticed the same thing and switch back to uniforms like those. I would bet the ranch that the fans would buy replica jerseys at a much faster pace than they are doing now, and I think our guys would look better, too.

And, by the way, those 1948 Boston Braves won the National League pennant.

I'm really happy for Chipper Jones and the way his season has gone so far. He is finally getting some of the national attention he has long deserved.

Whether he hits .400 or not, he's been sensational - and it seems the only things that can stop him are the nagging injuries that have plagued him for the past several years.

There are things about Chipper that the fans don't really have a chance to get to know. For example, whether the team wins or loses... whether he has a good night or an awful one... Chipper is there in front of his locker to answer questions from the press. He's probably quoted too much - not because he seeks the attention, but because he knows it's part of his job to make himself available.

Writers and broadcasters seek him out because he is unfailingly polite and honest. Now, with his average soaring, he's going to get more media attention than ever before. I'm confident he can handle it.

Chipper is a class act. Cooperstown is certainly in his future. For many years, the publicity here was mostly about the amazing pitching of Greg Maddux and Tom Glavine and John Smoltz and Steve Avery and even Charlie Leibrandt and Denny Neagle. Chipper sort of got lost in the shuffle. Not any more.

When you play for an extended period of time without your starting leftfielder, your starting centerfielder, sixty percent of your starting pitching rotation and virtually all the short men in your bullpen, the chances are good that you are going to struggle. That has certainly been the case with the Braves.

Nobody around baseball is going to feel sorry for them, but I hope Braves fans will keep in mind that, while injuries are a part of the game, the rash of injuries this team has suffered is unprecedented.

As I write this in early June, the Braves are 6 1/2 games out of first place. That's not good, but it's not insurmountable either. Don't give up yet.

I read in the paper where ESPN is going to employ various "artists" to sing Take Me Out to the Ballgame on their Sunday night telecasts. That is typical 21st century sports television. Don't try to improve the way you cover the games... instead go for a gimmick.

This is what happens when non-baseball people - people who don't really like or understand the game - become producers and bean counters. Your telecast goes right down the porcelain facility.

And it isn't just ESPN that is going this route - it's virtually everywhere.

I remember when we used to take pride in bringing you the best baseball telecast we knew how to do. Now it's all bells and whistles and very little meaningful content.

I know, I know... I sound like an old fogey... and that's because that is what I am. I'm so old that I believe they should do the promos and commercials between the innings so that they don't get in the way of you watching the game. That ain't happening, is it?

EDITOR'S NOTE

Skip Caray writes in this space every other month. Watch for him again in September.

In closing... if you want to hear a great young announcer at work, get on the old computer and dial up RomeBraves.com... then hit the prompt "listen to the game" and you'll be listening to Josh Caray call the action.

Chip and I are so proud of him that our buttons are popping. I just wish his grandfather was around to hear him. He's really, really good.

PLAYING PEPPER JOHN SMOLTZ

PATTY RASMUSSEN

Smoltz tries to relax at home while wearing a machine that ices and applies pressure to his surgically repaired shoulder.

SIX DAYS after season-ending and possible career-ending shoulder surgery, John Smoltz invited ChopTalk columnist Patty Rasmussen to his home in the Atlanta suburb of Alpharetta for an exclusive interview. The following are excerpts from the 90-minute conversation.

INTERVIEW BY
PATTY RASMUSSEN

CHOPTALK: First off, what's that thing on your shoulder?

JOHN SMOLTZ: It's a Game Ready ice machine that ices the shoulder and keeps steady pressure on it at the same time. The folks at the hospital sent it home with me. I'm supposed to use it close to eight hours each day, but I don't know how long I'll be using it.

CT: When did you know you might be in trouble (with the shoulder)?

SMOLTZ: I always knew my shoulder was compensating for my elbow. I worked awfully hard to strengthen my shoulder to overcome some of those issues, and for the longest time, I was able to pull it off.

CT: How long are you talking about? Years?

SMOLTZ: I've always had a hyper-mobile shoulder, meaning it subluxed (slipped out of the socket slightly) a lot. In the early part of my career, it came out a lot, so I worked my tail off to strengthen and tighten (the shoulder). I went from a lot to a very little subluxation and then reached a point in 1996 where it never came out again. I did nothing (surgical) to fix it, and I think my shoulder had a tendency to get worse. After four elbow operations, the shoulder was still "great." But last year was the first time I got a definitive sign that, "Uh-oh, something's wrong," and it was kind of a fluke.

CT: You knew something was wrong for sure last year after tweaking your shoulder warming up in the fourth inning on May 29 in Milwaukee. (Smoltz left that game.) At the time, did you think, "Surgery is next?"

SMOLTZ: No, I thought it would calm down and that it would be a short time before it was fine.

CT: You supposedly were working on your own on the back fields during most of spring training. Was that mainly to protect your shoulder?

SMOLTZ: Yeah. I almost pulled it off. I thought about ways to enhance trying to pitch but also how to deal with the media, the questions that were inevitable. I wasn't hiding anything. But the first game I threw, my shoulder and 'trap' (trapezius muscle) area became inflamed, and I said, "Shoot!" I didn't know it was going to be the start of what would be (season-ending surgery), but I knew that I would probably not make it through the year. I thought there would be several stints on the DL, but I would limp my way through the season.

CT: How bad was the discomfort - off-season, spring, to start the season, before surgery, now?

SMOLTZ: I never had two good days in a row. I never felt that I was turning the corner. I began to say over and over again in my mind, "I can't keep doing this. What we're getting out of it isn't worth all the work we're putting into it."

CT: Because at this point the pain was impacting your daily life, too?

SMOLTZ: Yeah. And really, when you're going through it, you usually see the light at the end of the tunnel. I always had an optimistic view, but this injury had taken its toll to the degree where everything that I'd tried before (to manage pain) wasn't touching it. I still don't know how I pitched the first month and a half. I took a lot of stuff (pain medication and shots) to get through those games.

CT: Why attempt to come back, especially given the "peace" you have about possibly not coming back?

SMOLTZ: The peace I have is if I can't come back. It would have been easy for me to say, "Okay, I'm done and I'm fine with it." But to do that would limit not just what God may have in store for me, but what I still may want to do. I want to keep the option of pitching again. Maybe if I said, "I just don't want to go out that way," people would understand that. But I've never felt that way. I've always said, "I know my body." I know

what I can and cannot do, and until I've proven to myself that I can't do it, then I want to give myself the option to pitch. There's no obligation, contract-wise. Certainly if I had a contract over the next two years, I would do everything to fulfill that contract.

CT: What exactly did Dr. James Andrews tell you after surgery? You said there were five to six things that were repaired. What are they?

SMOLTZ: His exact words were that he was, "very pleased with what he fixed." I know he fixed the labrum, to the best they could. It was not just torn - it was a mess. Dr. Joe Chandler (Braves director of medical services emeritus) said it was the worst he'd seen in 22 years. They found no arthritic changes, which was one of the biggest concerns they had. They shaved some bone off the AC (acromioclavicular) joint, they fixed a little bit of the rotator cuff, and the biceps was a mess, too. It was all done athroscopically. They worked through five holes all over the shoulder.

CT: How long did it take?

SMOLTZ: I think a little over an hour.

CT: What was your state of mind prior to the surgery and your state of mind now?

SMOLTZ: I wasn't anxious, but I knew there would be a lot more pain before I started feeling better. I wasn't looking forward to it, but you just grind through it. Right now I just wish I was already two weeks further down the road. I dread the post-surgery stuff.

CT: What was the first thing you said when you woke up post-op?

SMOLTZ: (grinning) The first thing? They asked me my name, and I said, "Bond. James Bond."

CT: If you're able to come back, and it is an "if"...

SMOLTZ: It's a big "if," but I'm going to know for sure that I couldn't do it. I don't want to sit in this chair and watch a game next May and say, "Look at that. I could do that." I'm not trying to gain something. I'm not going after a big contract. I'm not going after a milestone.

CT: Would you pitch as a starter or a reliever?

SMOLTZ: I have no idea. If I had to lean toward one, it would be relieving, but I never confine to one thing. My body will let me know.

CT: If you aren't able to come back, what will you do with the rest of your life? Is the senior golf tour a serious possibility?

> "THE LAST THROW I MADE IN BASEBALL, I DON'T WANT TO EXPERIENCE PAIN LIKE THAT AGAIN."

SMOLTZ: All the things I've talked about, I plan on doing. The senior tour is a serious goal. I don't know if I'll be successful, but I'll play in a tournament or two. I'll work my way, the right way, and hopefully qualify. I'm going to do it. I have to be 50 to qualify. I want to get in good shape and be able to work out. Right now, I'm tired. I'm not sleeping, and I'm in a decent amount of pain, and that's what could hurt my rehab. My pain tolerance is higher than they may want it to be. I look forward to resuming those types of activities, because they're important to me for quality of life.

CT: How grueling do you think rehab will be? Has it started?

SMOLTZ: Yes, it's started, and they tell me it's pretty difficult. It's the longest rehab without activity. I've already started passive motion exercises. I'm working with (Braves physical therapist) Lloyd Van Pamelin. I'm not going to sit around and do the bare minimum. They started moving the shoulder a little in the first few days after the surgery. Dr. Andrews said it's typically four to five months before I'll throw a baseball, which will be pretty weird. When you have surgery, you're usually having it at your worst, so your last throws were pretty painful. The last throw I made in baseball (June 2), I don't want to experience pain like that again. I think the surgery has fixed that, but it doesn't make it any easier to go back to throwing when that's the last thing you remember.

CT: Do you remember the last throw or pitch you made?

SMOLTZ: The last throw was an out. It was a slider. I had given up a couple of hits in a one-run game. I blew the save (June 2 vs. Marlins, Braves won 7-5 in 10 innings). The next day, the pain was unbelievable.

CT: When will you know if a comeback is a legitimate possibility?

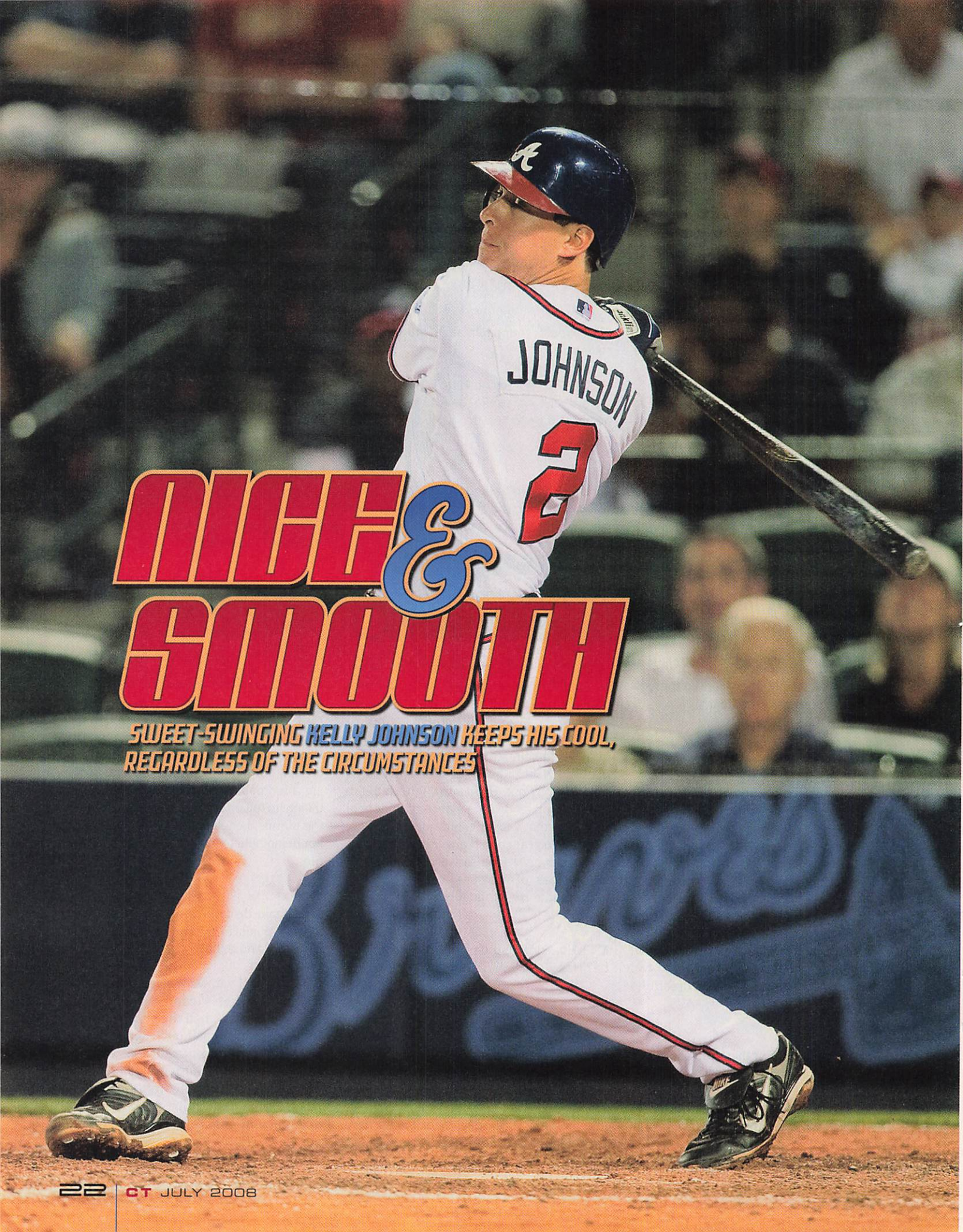
SMOLTZ: It won't be the first time I throw a ball, but I think I'll know that I'm *not* going to come back sooner than I would know that I *will* come back.

CT: You said the last year and a half has been miserable. Can you elaborate?

SMOLTZ: I lost the ability to enjoy the things you take for granted like shooting a basket, putting a tee in the ground, throwing a football, random movements. It was taking its toll on me and getting me down in the dumps. I could take the limitations, but not being able to just lift my arm... It wasn't fun.

CT: If you discover in December that you are not going to pitch again, how are you going to handle that?

SMOLTZ: I will walk away with incredible confidence. I can't say that now, because I haven't had the chance to know for certain that I can't pitch again. I wasn't willing to sit in the press conference and say, "I'm having surgery, and effective October 2, I'm officially retiring." At this point, I don't know if it's an 80 percent or a 20 percent chance. I want to know 100 percent.



NICE & SMOOTH

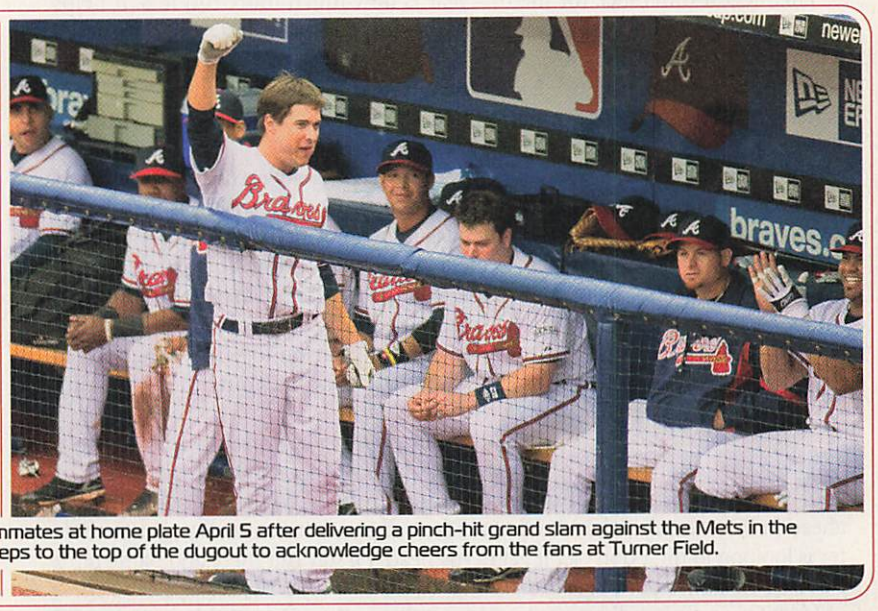
SWEET-SWINGING KELLY JOHNSON KEEPS HIS COOL, REGARDLESS OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES

BY JAY BUSBEE

It was the kind of moment that gives baseball players nightmares. Leading the division-leading Phillies, 2-1, with two outs in the ninth inning, the Braves had the game in the bag when Philadelphia's Chris Coste lofted a soft popup to Kelly Johnson. Call it a night and get ready for tomorrow, right?

Except it didn't quite work that way. The ball hit Johnson's glove and popped out, allowing the Phillies to rally and stick the Braves with one of their toughest non-October losses in recent memory. They say baseball's a team game, and the Braves squandered opportunities both before and after the error. But there's no denying Kelly Johnson's error was the most painful mistake.

After the 4-3, 10-inning defeat, Johnson stayed in the clubhouse to answer every reporter's question, every implicit how-could-you-screw-up-something-so-simple criticism. One can hope he didn't view any of the message boards or blog postings that, in typically unrestrained internet fashion, tore apart Johnson for the misplay. But even at their most unhinged, fans and reporters couldn't be any tougher on Johnson than he is on himself.



PHOTOS: PAUL ABELL/ATLANTA BRAVES

Kelly Johnson receives congratulations from teammates at home plate April 5 after delivering a pinch-hit grand slam against the Mets in the seventh inning of an 11-5 victory, then steps to the top of the dugout to acknowledge cheers from the fans at Turner Field.

That error was a rare misstep by a guy who's quietly become one of the Braves' key players. You won't find the 26-year-old Johnson anywhere near the top of most rankings of second baseman, and at this writing he's not even in the top five at his position in All-Star voting. And yet he's spent almost the whole first half hanging around the .300 mark, putting together a solid, understated complement to the astonishing league-leading batting of Chipper Jones and the rest of his teammates.

"Making a lot of noise, drawing a lot of attention to myself isn't me," Johnson said. "I try to focus on consistency, on being more aggressive at the plate rather than anywhere else."

It's not like Johnson has suddenly discovered some kind of Zen calm on the field. He's always remained serene in the midst of chaos, always banking on that smooth swing of his, even as he got bounced to every position on the diamond except pitcher, catcher and first base.

"I've always been kind of even-keeled," Johnson said. "My demons have always been internal. I'm my toughest critic by far. I'll have what I think is a terrible game or a terrible appearance at the plate, and people will compliment me on it. It makes me wonder, 'Are you seeing what I'm seeing?'"

One of the first to see K.J. at work was John Flannery, one of Atlanta's Texas-based scouts who spotted Johnson in high school. Flannery said last year that he used to drive by Johnson's high school in Austin just to watch him play.

"I didn't know what position he'd end up playing," Flannery said, "but I thought he was going to be one of those guys that when he got to the big leagues would be a .300-plus hitter and hit 20 home runs consistently."

After the Braves selected him in the first round of the supplemental draft in 2000, Johnson wound his way ever upward through the minors. He posted solid numbers at every stop, culminating with a .310 average through 44 games in Richmond in 2005 that earned him a promotion to Atlanta. And, other than a short rehab assignment in 2006 following elbow surgery, he hasn't been back to the minors since.

Still, to hear him talk, he's just an 0-for-5 night away from a plane back to Richmond. "It's a constant struggle for me to find my swing," he said. "I can get comfortable and locked in, and then all of a sudden, it's gone, and I feel like I'm starting over."

Ridiculous, says his hitting coach Terry Pendleton.

"Kelly's got one of the smoothest swings on this club, and that includes Chipper," Pendleton said. "I'm never impressed by Kelly Johnson, because I always expect him to be hitting the way he's hitting."

"I love his swing," said Blaine Boyer, one of Johnson's closest friends who has played with him at various spots since their time with the rookie league Gulf Coast Braves in 2000. "He just does everything right. He's quiet, goes about his business the way you're supposed to."

That calm demeanor has probably helped keep Johnson in management's good graces, even as he's been tossed around the field like a batting-practice ball. Johnson, drafted in 2000 as a shortstop, broke into the majors as an outfielder, but an elbow

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

GLAVINE AND SMOLTZ ARE GREAT TEACHERS

I DON'T JUDGE MY PROGRESS by my won-loss record or my ERA. After Tommy John surgery in 2004, my biggest goal, from then on, was to make every start, injury-free. My arm has never felt stronger than it does right now, even stronger than before the surgery.

So I've carried that goal forward every year. I look at my progress and the things I need to work on, from start to start. I can't say there's any one specific thing I'm working on right now. I want to get first-pitch strikes. That's a big goal.

Last year was a big learning experience for me. There's a lot to get used to, not just on the field but in the clubhouse, too. There are new guys, veterans... You learn to listen.

The biggest difference for me this year is how much more fun it is. It helps a lot and keeps you loose. I didn't put pressure on myself last year, but there's a learning curve for any place.

I'm not the youngest guy (23) in the clubhouse now that Jair Jurrjens (22) is here, but I've been the youngest player on all the teams I played on in the minor leagues. I'm still a young dog! I'm still learning.

The main thing I've worked on this year is keeping my mechanics consistent from start to start. It sounds so vague, but just throwing strikes is the biggest key to success here, and it's not as easy as it looks sometimes.

The best part of being up here is the level of competition. You're tested every time you go out there. It's a very humbling sport, and it challenges you to keep working hard to stay on top. The batters I face want to knock me out. They're doing their job, too.

> "I'LL STAY OUT THERE AND BATTLE UNTIL BOBBY COX COMES OUT TO GET ME."

Our opponents work just as hard as we do, and that's why you have to stay on top of your game. Any number of things can cause trouble. When you're not getting ahead in the count, you have to throw a fastball - and that's usually what the batter is looking to hit. I don't let it get in my head. I'll stay out there and battle until Bobby Cox comes out to get me.

I just try to make adjustments as best as I can. But if I can't, I know what I'll need to do in the next bullpen session.

Bullpen sessions are teaching time. Before the session, Roger (McDowell) will ask me what I want to work on, and I'll usually have an idea from the previous outing. He watches over me. I like Roger a lot. He's very open with me. We have a little pitching coach-player bond going on. He knows what I'm thinking now, and we know how to communicate with each other.

Developing that relationship takes time. As a coach, you can say, "You need to do this." But without a relationship, sometimes it's tough to take the advice. You create a friendship.

I've been really fortunate to work quite a bit with Tom Glavine, mainly because he's a lefty. He comes to watch my bullpen sessions sometimes, and I've been able to pick his brain. I'll ask him what he thought or whether he saw something that needs to be adjusted. He's encouraged me to stay very consistent with my mechanics and where I end up after each pitch.

I've also become pretty good friends with John Smoltz. We joke around, and we talk about pitching. He gets on me about my bunting sometimes! It's awesome to have those guys as a reference, to pick their brains to see what they think about one certain pitch or at-bat.

I do like to hit and I miss it, but then you think of all the work that goes into hitting consistently and you know that you need to spend your time working at being a consistent pitcher. I'd rather stick to pitching!

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

injury sidelined him for all of 2006. By the time he recovered, Atlanta had a logjam in the outfield. Johnson thus spent the entire off-season after the 2006 season prepping for a shift to second base.

"The Braves showed a lot of trust in me," Johnson said. "I owed it to them to do everything I could to live up to that kind of trust."

The fact that the Braves wanted him to make the switch was a testament to how highly they regarded Johnson's swing. But management may have overreached by placing him in the leadoff spot, a role for which he wasn't entirely suited. From the leadoff position in 2007, Johnson had an on-base percentage of only .372, well below what he would register in spots like the seven-hole. Whether because of comfort or opposing strategy, Johnson has experienced more success when he hasn't been the first Braves hitter of the ballgame.

"After I was off leadoff, I started getting more fastballs," Johnson said. "I felt like I could be more aggressive, and that's always when I start hitting better."

Like the rest of the Braves, Johnson is struggling on the road, hitting about 60 points less when he's away from home. And like most of the Braves, Johnson has no idea why.

"I had the complete opposite situation last year," he said about hitting .256 at home and .296 on the road. "We've played some good competition on the road in the early part of this season. It's a long season, and I'm hoping that things will fall into place."

Over the course of this "long season," though, the major question for Johnson is whether he can keep beating himself up without eventually disrupting his on-field performance.

"At some point every year, I reach some kind of balance," Johnson said. "It happened last year, where I felt like I got into a groove and the balls that had been getting caught were starting to fall. I started out really slow this season, and then [in early May] started getting those hits that I hadn't been getting earlier."

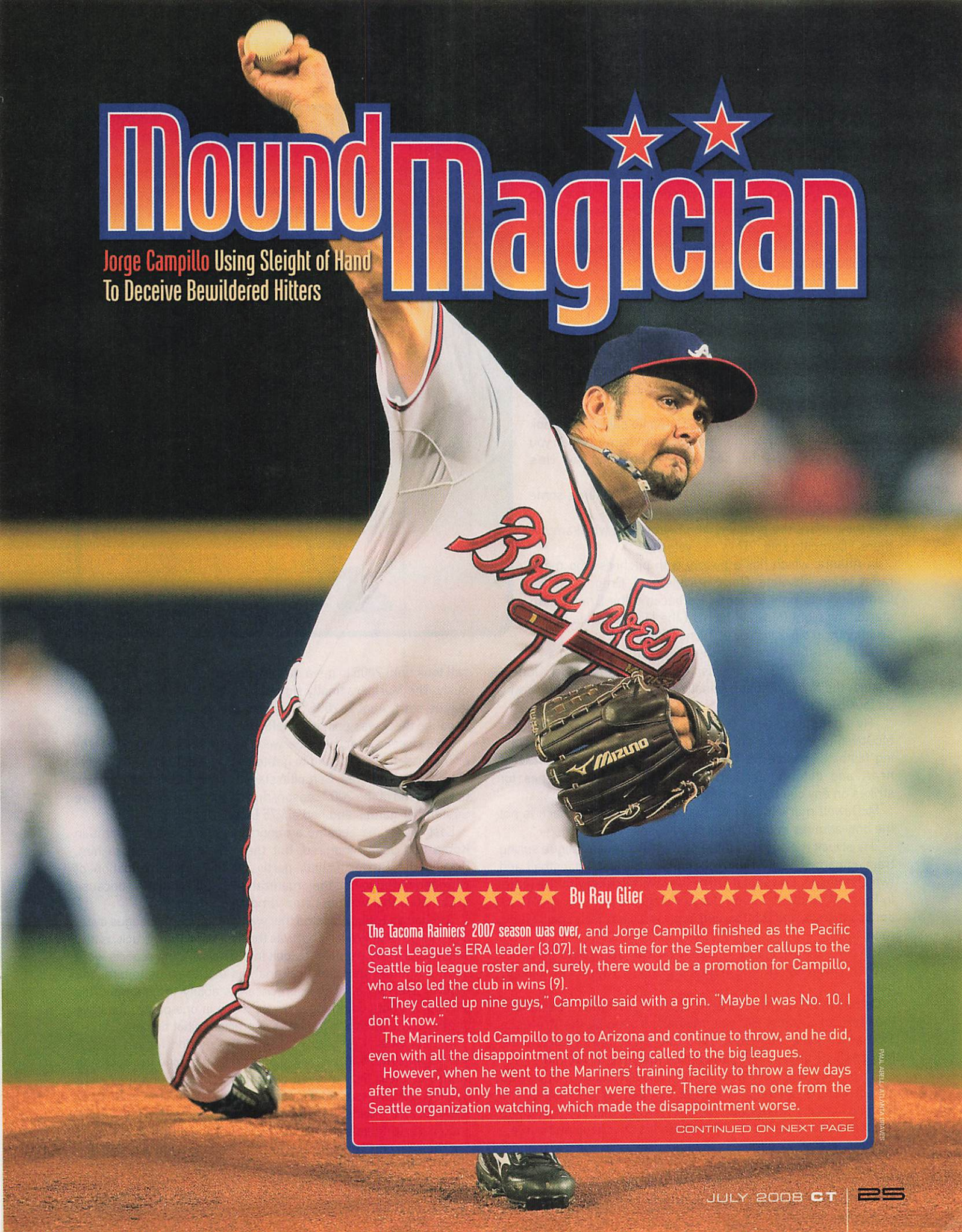
In the clubhouse after that disastrous Philadelphia game, Johnson was matter-of-fact about what went down, not even trying to make sense of the debacle.

"It's not supposed to happen," he said. "It doesn't happen. That's all I can say."

What else could he say? It's one game out of 162. Sometimes the hits find open spaces, and sometimes the pop flies do. You ride the season out, Kelly Johnson style, and soon enough, things will break your way.

Mound Magician

Jorge Campillo Using Sleight of Hand To Deceive Bewildered Hitters



PAUL ABELL, ATLANTA BRAVES

By Ray Glier

The Tacoma Rainiers' 2007 season was over, and Jorge Campillo finished as the Pacific Coast League's ERA leader (3.07). It was time for the September callups to the Seattle big league roster and, surely, there would be a promotion for Campillo, who also led the club in wins (9).

"They called up nine guys," Campillo said with a grin. "Maybe I was No. 10. I don't know."

The Mariners told Campillo to go to Arizona and continue to throw, and he did, even with all the disappointment of not being called to the big leagues.

However, when he went to the Mariners' training facility to throw a few days after the snub, only he and a catcher were there. There was no one from the Seattle organization watching, which made the disappointment worse.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

"They slapped him in the face," said Dave Brundage, manager of the Richmond Braves, who worked in the Seattle organization from 1987 to 2006 where he first met Campillo. "He pitched his butt off, gave everything he had, and they said go to Arizona."

Dismayed, Campillo went to dinner the night of his solo throwing session in Arizona, wondering what his next move would be. Around midnight, his phone rang, and it was the Mariners, after all. They needed an arm in Detroit, and Campillo had to catch a flight.

This is what it's like to be Jorge Campillo.

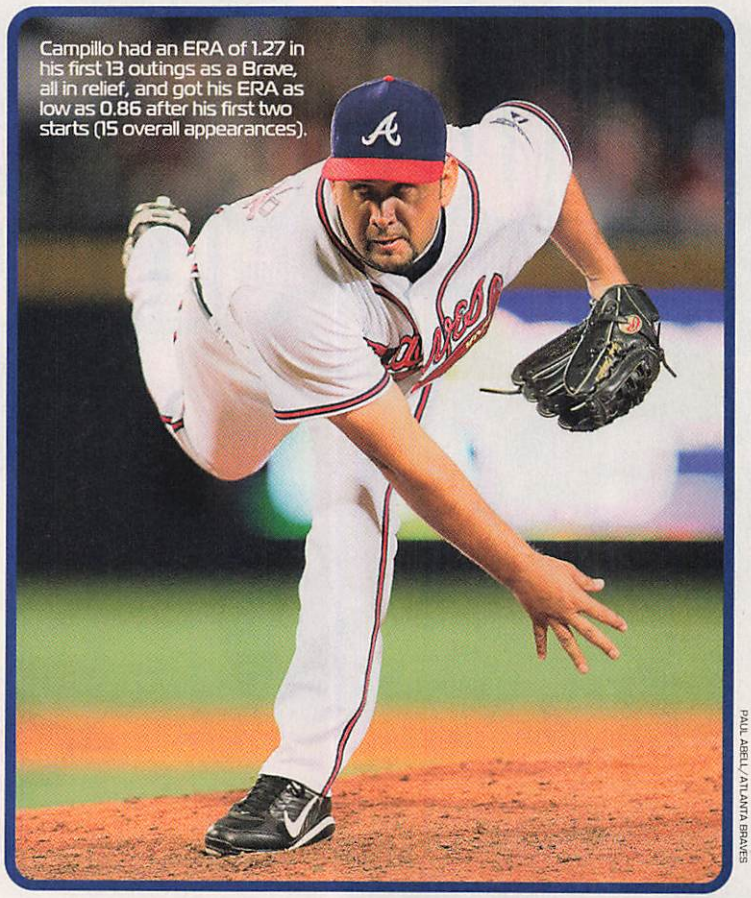
He has to grow on you. You have to watch him pitch, and then ponder what you've seen. It's not easy to make a quick decision about him because his modest fastball - 85 to 86 miles per hour - does not impress. It took the Mariners a week after Tacoma's season ended to decide that, maybe, the Pacific Coast League's ERA leader could be of some value to the big league club.

"This is the history of my life," Campillo said. "They look at me and say, 'Okay, let me see one more game.' When you throw hard - 95, 96 - they see you one game and say, 'He's ready.' (But) me?"

Campillo, 29, cuts a little smile. He knows he takes some getting used to.

"I think that's the problem with Seattle and why I am not there," Campillo said. "They like velocity."

In Atlanta, which has a history with pitchers who make radar guns obsolete (Tom Glavine and Greg Maddux), Campillo feels right at home. He became the Braves' fifth starter the night (May 20) he held the Mets to three hits in six innings in a 6-2 victory at Turner Field.



Campillo had an ERA of 1.27 in his first 13 outings as a Brave, all in relief, and got his ERA as low as 0.86 after his first two starts (15 overall appearances).

PAUL ABELL/ATLANTA BRAVES

In his first three starts for the Braves, Campillo had a 2-0 record and a 0.99 ERA. It wasn't until his fourth start, June 4 against the Marlins, that he finally ran into some trouble, giving up four runs in four innings.

"He's not supposed to be doing what he's doing," said Roger McDowell, the Braves' pitching coach. "He doesn't throw a blazing fastball. He doesn't have above average anything - except heart and determination. He throws four quality pitches for strikes on any count and in any situation."

McDowell marvels over Campillo's stuff, but the coach is not the only admirer in the Braves clubhouse.

"He struck me out with three pitches in a minor league spring training game," said Brian McCann. "A well-located fastball and two changeups I swung at when they were halfway to the plate. In the back of mind, I knew Jorge was going to throw that (second) changeup, and I still swung at it. I was like, 'Holy cow!' Filthy, man, filthy."

Glavine, the 300-game winner who can appreciate an artful pitcher, watches from the dugout and says, "Where has this guy been?"

Campillo, 29, has mostly been south of the border, pitching in the Mexican League. He was originally signed by the Braves in 1996 as a 17-year old non-drafted free agent, then loaned to the Mexico City Tigres in 1997, and finally released by Atlanta.

He pitched eight seasons in the Mexican League, unable to attract a lot of attention from the big leagues because of the humble fastball. Scouts watched him for a game, and shrugged, not convinced Campillo could win with his changeup and curve.

Campillo won 12 games in the Mexican League in 2003, and it still took until 2005 to get a major league club to look at him seriously. The Mariners finally signed him, and he made his first big league start, Aug. 2, 2005. However, that lasted just one inning, because there was pain in his elbow.

Three weeks later, he underwent Tommy John surgery, another major setback in trying to get to the big leagues.

His elbow repaired, Campillo stayed in the Seattle organization until the end of the 2007 season, during which he appeared in five September games and had a 6.75 ERA.

Last winter, he became a minor league free agent. Teams in Korea and Japan inquired, but they wouldn't commit to him. Finally, the Braves called, partly on the recommendation of Brundage, who joined the organization in 2007, but also because of statistics that wouldn't stop jumping off the page.

"He had an ERA in Tacoma that was well below the league average," said Frank Wren. "That was the first thing that struck us and said this is a guy we need to look into. The scouting reports were okay, but it was the statistical analysis that drew us to him. You have to see him a lot to appreciate his ability to command his pitches. It's not something you would see in one game. You have to have some history with him to appreciate what he does."

Indeed, when Campillo walked to the mound for his June 3 start against the Marlins, the scouts who sit behind the backstop at Turner Field did not even pick up the radar guns they were holding the previous half inning. They just sat there, several shaking their heads, as Campillo threw curves that bent from shoulders-to-knees, or changeups that seemed to stop in midair.

It has taken Campillo almost 10 years to convince the big

leagues he has some value, but there is no bitterness or defensiveness.

"He is not mad, he is not sad," said his wife, Deidamia. "He is disappointed he didn't get here sooner. He never gives up. He's always thinking something good is going to happen."

Campillo's disposition is perhaps one reason why he has been able to endure the slights. His wife said he lights up their home in Mableton with funny noises for their son, Jorge Jr., who is 1. And when he returns home from road trips, he adds several chapters to the adventure story he is telling daughter Nicole, 6.

Campillo eventually gets to happy endings in his stories for Nicole, and he is confident his baseball career will have a satisfying finish to it, also. He wants to pitch five or six years in the big leagues, not to prove a point to anyone, but just to prove a point to himself.

"I'm still working. I want to stay here for a long time," Campillo said. "I have to work harder than the other guy who has natural talent.

"I need to show myself I can pitch up here. I need to prove to myself I can do it. I told myself last winter this could be my last opportunity."

PAUL ABELL/ATLANTA BRAVES

SABATHIA SWEEPSTAKES BEGINNING TO HEAT UP

THE INDIANS are reluctant to concede as the July 31 trading deadline approaches, but they recognize that the faster they trade last year's AL **Cy Young** Award and **Warren Spahn** Award winner **C.C. Sabathia**, the better their return will be. Potential suitors will fret about trading prospects for a two- or three-month rental of the big lefthander, but keep this in mind: The loss of Sabathia as a free agent would yield two premium draft picks as compensation. For the Yankees, it's a logical play. Get Sabathia. See how he handles New York. Then decide whether to give him big money before he hits the open market. If the experiment failed, the Yankees would at least get the draft picks to help replace the prospects they traded.

The Cubs were expected to lead the charge for **C.C. Sabathia**, and the Brewers were another team poised to make a push for an accomplished starter. Milwaukee's Double-A Huntsville affiliate features a number of promising sluggers – third baseman **Mat Gamel**, rightfielder **Matt LaPorta**, catcher **Angel Salome** and first baseman **Chris Errecart**. The Brewers could trade one or more of those players and groom another as the replacement for first baseman **Prince Fielder**, who is unlikely to sign a long-term deal and is a candidate to be traded.

The Phillies, lacking the prospect inventory to land an impact starting pitcher such as **C.C. Sabathia**, were trying to add another left-handed reliever to complement **J.C. Romero**. Another possibility for the Phils was to obtain another left-handed hitter for their bench. **Chris Snelling**, back at Triple A, is too much of a physical question, and the right-handed hitting **So Taguchi** has been a disappointment.

Reds general manager **Walt Jocketty** says there is a "stronger likelihood" of retaining leftfielder **Adam Dunn** and rightfielder **Ken Griffey Jr.** than trading them. "I'm still evaluating the team," said Jocketty, who joined the Reds in January and replaced **Wayne Krivsky** on April 23. "I haven't had the luxury of being here a long period." Jocketty says he is open to any team's offer that will improve his club, but that the Reds are still trying to win this season.

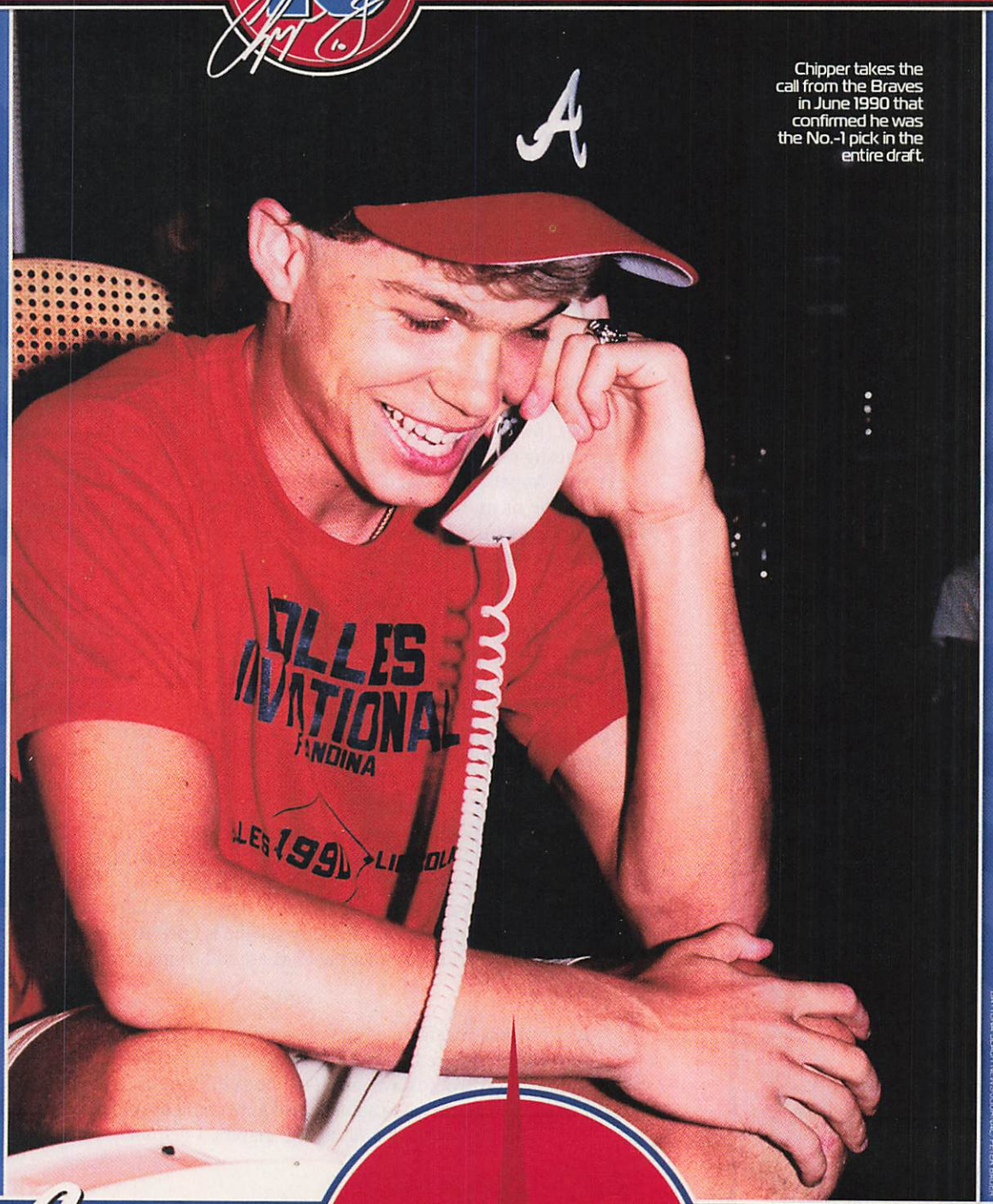
Adam Dunn, meanwhile, says he is open to signing a contract extension with the Reds before he hits free agency. "If you would have asked me last year, I probably would have said, 'No,'" he said. "But this is the first time since I've been here where we've actually had guys come up and make a significant impact, not just come up and be role players. I definitely see a future, definitely."

By trading outfielder **Matt Kemp**, the Dodgers could put together a deal for virtually any hitter on the trade market, from the Pirates' **Jason Bay** to the Rockies' **Matt Holliday**. To this point, the Dodgers have resisted moving Kemp or any of their other top young players, but their stance might be changing. Rival executives are skeptical, considering that the Dodgers frequently have backed out of trades involving their youngsters.

- KEN ROSENTHAL IS A SENIOR WRITER FOR FOXSPORTS.COM

FIRST IN A SERIES

CHIPPER #10 THROUGH THE YEARS



Chipper takes the call from the Braves in June 1990 that confirmed he was the No.-1 pick in the entire draft.

DAYTONA BEACH NEWS-JOURNAL, PETER BAUER

A STAR IS BORN

Talent and Potential Were Unmistakable, But Challenges And Even Depression Intervened

BY JON COOPER

Once upon a time (1990 to be specific), there was a kid who seemed too good to be true and a struggling baseball team, aspiring for better days, with one shot to get this high school phenom before anyone else did.

Larry Wayne Jones Jr., was that kid, and the Atlanta Braves were that team.

The star shortstop, nicknamed "Chipper" (for chip off the old block), led The Bolles High School, in Jacksonville, to the Florida state championship in 1990, when he hit .448 and was the state High School Player of the Year. Having grown up watching the Braves, all young Jones wanted was to make it to the majors in Atlanta, a team that lost a major league high 97 games in 1989.

"Chipper [Jones] was our top guy," recalled Bobby Cox, who then was the Braves' general manager. "And he wanted to sign - that was the key."

Then-assistant vice president of scouting Paul Snyder recalled a visit to Jacksonville with then-Braves third base coach Jimy Williams to see the kid in action.

"Seeing him play, there was such an air about him, he had that little swagger that you like to see," Snyder said. "All the good players have it."

Williams, now the Phillies' bench coach, recalled, "Bobby Cox asked me what I thought 'about that kid Chipper Jones that you saw up there.' "I said, 'Well, I'm not a scout, but in my opinion, if he's not a No. 1 pick, I don't know who is.'"

The Braves weren't getting the same positive signs from power-pitcher Todd Van Poppel, who was considered the favorite to be taken No. 1 overall but whose negative attitude toward the team only strengthened the Braves' resolve to sign Jones.

"[Van Poppel] stood me up twice and Bobby [Cox] flew out to meet with the family and they stood him up," Snyder recalled. "He told us to draft him and just do what we had to do. We knew who we wanted: The vote was 5-4 that it was going to be Chipper. We shouldn't even have been thinking about the other guy (who wound up pitching 11 years in the majors, posting a 40-52 record and 5.58 ERA)."

The 1993 International League Rookie of the Year.

ROGER WOOD

Chipper admitted that in the days leading up to the draft, he pictured himself in other uniforms (Pittsburgh and Seattle, who chose fifth and sixth, most frequently came to mind), but he was ready to close the deal if the Braves came a knockin', which they did.

It turns out that the hardest part of getting Chipper signed was getting him home in time to meet with team representatives the Sunday before the draft, because he was more than 100 miles away at his high school prom.

"Sunday morning, the Braves called and said they wanted to meet with us and Chipper, and I had no idea where he was," recalled his father, Larry Jones Sr. "I ended up calling his baseball coach, and they ran him down over at some beach house on Jacksonville Beach and told him he had to be home at 2 o'clock. He got home about 2 o'clock."

Braves scouts Tony DeMacio and Dean Jongewaard told Chipper the team planned to draft him first. Both sides exchanged offers - Chipper says the Braves offered $250,000 while he asked for $300,000 - then Chipper and his dad went upstairs to talk it over.

"I told him, 'You can make more money than this,'" Larry Sr. recalled. "He said, 'Dad, I want to be playing in two weeks.'"

"I said, 'Look, I don't want this to be a drawn-out process,'" said Chipper. "Let's just ask them to meet in the middle, and let's go play ball.' We went downstairs and they said, 'Sign on the dotted line.' So, I was signed, sealed and delivered very quickly."

Two weeks later, he was in Bradenton (Gulf Coast League), but he soon found that getting through rookie ball was tougher than getting to it.

"Rookie ball is more like boot camp," said Chipper, who hit .229 in 44 games with one homer and 18 RBIs, the same number of errors he committed. "It's a weeding-out process, and I struggled. I was coming off a broken right hand. I was pretty weak, I had trouble left-handed, I had trouble adjusting to the wooden bat. But that rookie ball season motivated me to go home in the off-season and dedicate myself to getting to the level that I needed to be at."

The next year at Macon (A), he finished at .326 with a league-leading 104 runs scored, 15 homers, 11 triples, 98 RBIs, 154 hits and 40 stolen bases. Jones was named the outstanding prospect in the South Atlantic League.

He split '92 between Durham (advanced A) and Greenville (Double A), putting up respectable numbers at Durham (.277, 4 HR, 31 RBIs) then taking off at Greenville. At Double A, Chipper hit .346 in 67 games, getting 92 hits, including a franchise-record 11 triples, and hit .429 with runners in scoring position,

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

CHIPPER'S 400/.400 PACE

[400 Career Home Runs/.400 Batting Average]

- Began the 2006 season with a career batting average of .303. Career BA entering 2008 was .307 and stands at .310 at press time

- Through June 11, led the majors in batting average (.419), hits (93), multi-hit games (30) and on-base percentage (.504). Ranked third in the majors in slugging percentage (.676).

- His 81 hits through May tied an Atlanta record set by Ralph Garr in 1974. The "Roadrunner" finished with 214 hits, the third-best season by an Atlanta Brave.

- According to Elias Sports Bureau, first hitter since Nomar Garciparra in 2000 to be hitting .400 or better after June 10.

- Hit 400th career home run June 5 off Florida's Ricky Nolasco to became seventh member of an exclusive club: .310 career batting average, 400 homers and 1,300 RBIs. The other members of the club are Hall of Famers Ted Williams, Babe Ruth, Lou Gehrig, Stan Musial and Jimmy Foxx, and current Red Sox outfielder Manny Ramirez. Also moved into 43rd place on all-time home run list.

- By hitting .410 in April, became only the third player in the last 10 years to hit at least .410 in the month. Barry Bonds (.472 in 2004) and Vladimir Guerrero (.410 in 2000) are the others. Then hit .417 in May.

- Two hits on June 3 gave him 2,202 for his career and moved him past Hall of Famer Eddie Mathews for second on the Braves' all-time list. Hank Aaron (3,600) is the only Brave with more hits.

- Hitting .447 (46-for-103) with 11 homers and 20 RBIs against the NL East, including a sizzling .594 (19 for 32) against Florida and .571 (8 for 14) against the Phillies. He's hitting .385 (10 for 26) against the Mets and .290 (9 for 31) against Washington. In 2007, he hit .350 with 19 homers and 51 RBIs in the division.

- Has gone hitless in back-to-back games just once in 2008 (May 9 and 10 in Pittsburgh). Last time he went hitless in three consecutive games in which he had more than one at-bat was June 21, 22 and 23, 2006.

- Hit safely in 51 of the first 59 games of this season.

- Hitting .444 right-handed and .404 left-handed.

– JC

helping the G-Braves (now Mississippi) to chalk up the only 100-win season in their history and win the Southern League championship.

Jones proved a big hit with his Greenville teammates.

"He didn't make sure people knew that he was a No.-1 draft pick and that he was going to make it because he was a bonus baby," remembered then-Greenville teammate and current Atlanta bullpen coach Eddie Perez. "He got there, worked hard, and surprised a lot of people with the way he acted. He was a great kid."

Jones continued his ascension - and domination - in 1993 at Triple-A Richmond.

He led the International League in hits, runs, total bases (268, still the Richmond record) and triples in being named the Braves' Triple-A Minor League Player of the Year, the Tommie Aaron Award winner as Richmond's MVP, and the league's Rookie of the Year. But the ultimate prize came on Sept. 10.

"My manager, Grady Little, called me in after a playoff game and said, 'You're going to the big leagues and you ain't coming back,'" Jones recalled.

"I remember him calling me and saying, 'Guess where I am?'" said Larry Sr. "He said, 'I'm on a plane to San Diego. I just got called up to the big leagues.'"

Jones was thrown right into the fire at the major league level, thanks to the Braves' dramatic pennant race with the San Francisco Giants, but he managed to get into eight games, making his debut Sept. 11, taking over for Jeff Blauser in the ninth inning of a 13-1 blowout.

Three days later, at Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium, he made his first major league plate appearance.

With one out in the bottom of the seventh of a 10-0 game, Jones batted for Blauser and faced lefty Kevin Wickander. It didn't take long to get his first major league hit - although it surely wasn't among his longest.

"First pitch I ever saw in the big leagues, I hit a swinging bunt down the third-base line, and I beat it out for a basehit," Jones recalled. "It was a blowout game. They were playing back, and I hit it soft enough to get a basehit."

He still laughs at the distance of the blow, but he also remembers an important lesson from the at-bat.

"I was kind of taken by surprise that I was going to pinch-hit. I wasn't loose, I wasn't prepared," he said. "It taught me a lesson right there, my first at-bat in the big leagues, that you have to stay prepared for everything."

Nothing could have prepared him for the next season, however.

Starting leftfielder Ron Gant was injured in an off-season dirt bike accident, leading to his release, and Chipper was chosen to replace him. But his superb spring training ended suddenly, on Mar. 18, when he tore the anterior cruciate ligament in his left knee.

"I worked my whole life to get to the big leagues, and here I am in spring training... I'm leading the team in average, home runs, RBIs, playing great and I have the game taken away from me," he recalled. "It was probably one of the most devastating and traumatic nights of my career. Back then, there was no guarantee that you were going to bounce back from an ACL tear. I had never had any major injuries before, never had any surgeries before. It was a scary time."

Larry Sr. remembers that April 4, 1994, was especially hurtful, because he and Chipper were together in Atlanta - but for the wrong reason.

"We went up for the surgery," he recalled. "When they were getting ready to wheel him into the operating room, he said, 'Everything I've worked for may be all over.' It just broke my heart.

"That night, we were watching Opening Night, and Ryan Klesko was playing left field in his spot," he continued. "Everybody's watching the game, and Chipper had his head turned toward the window. He wouldn't even watch it. It was devastating to him."

But devastation made him even stronger and more resolute.

"I went through a long period of depression, just didn't know what to do with myself, didn't know if I'd be the same player that I was before. So it took some time," admitted Jones, who took several jobs to pay the bills, including working on a sports talk radio show.

"But it motivated me to get in the weight room, work myself back to a point where, when we started playing baseball again in '95, I was physically and mentally ready."

In fact, Jones said he would have been ready to take the field had the work stoppage that ended the season on Aug. 12, 1994, been settled. Instead, he had to wait through an agonizing off-season.

Both Chipper and the sport he loved were at a crossroads, but he knew where he was headed.

"Nothing was going to keep me out of the big leagues in '95," he said. "I had been through hell and back, and '95 was going to be my time."

NEXT MONTH: BREAKING IN.

THE BUSINESS SIDE OF 400/.400

BY PATTY RASMUSSEN

It's good to be Chipper Jones right now. All sorts of people take notice when you're hitting .400 and joining the 400 home run club at the same time.

Less than 12 hours after Chipper hit No. 400 June 5, a Fox Sports Net-sponsored billboard congratulating him was already displayed along, I-85, one of Atlanta's major arteries. Fans are deliriously happy. The front office smiles, too.

Jones' agent, B.B. Abbott, sees a different side to Jones' magnified profile.

"He's certainly been the topic of conversation," said Abbott. "I get close to 10 calls a week about potential endeavors, endorsements, media requests, or an 'investment idea' for the National League's leading hitter."

USA Today made Chipper the subject of its sports "cover story" one day in late May, and Sports Illustrated ran a major feature in its issue dated June 16. Abbott said traffic on Jones' website, chippperjones.com, has also picked up, both in "hits" and autograph requests.

"Chipper signs around 5,000 items each year in order to fulfill all the requests," he added. "This year will eclipse that."

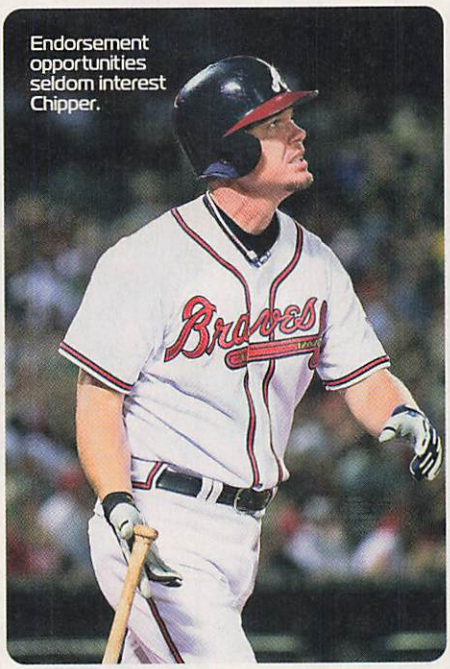
Jones is aware of the increased interest both by media and potential sponsors, but by his own admission, he keeps it in perspective.

"B.B. knows I'm a low-maintenance kind of guy," said Jones. "I don't want to be bothered with a lot of distractions that life throws at you from a financial standpoint or from an attention standpoint. I don't do a lot of commercials. I don't do a lot of sponsorship stuff, because my private time is so very precious to me. I just tell him that unless he's got something that's going to blow my socks off, just don't bother!"

After filtering through requests of all sorts, Abbott takes the ones that seem to suit Chipper to the man himself. But Abbott said Jones turns down "99.9 percent of anything" he brings him.

"He's had the opportunity twice to film major commercials but didn't want to take time from his kids and his family," said Abbott. "He worked really hard in the beginning of his career to be in a position where he could pick and choose."

Typically, the media is first to jump on a player's bandwagon. Once the national media begins talking about a player, he becomes a "hot" commodity.



Endorsement opportunities seldom interest Chipper.

PAUL ABELL/ATLANTA BRAVES

"It happened quite a bit in 2000," said Abbott.

Following his 1999 MVP season, Jones signed a substantial endorsement deal with Mizuno, the Japanese-based sporting goods manufacturer.

"It was a big endorsement deal and one that didn't require a lot of his time," said Abbott. "It's a pretty interesting phenomenon to watch. I expect that we will really start to heat up if (Chipper) carries .400 into the All-Star Game (July 15)."

There's no telling whether another significant endorsement opportunity will emerge as a result of the season that Jones is putting together. But whether he accepts anything likely will be based on factors other than money. A case in point was his recent appearance at the introduction of his charity wine (page 62). The Miracle League, one of Jones' pet charities, will receive the proceeds from every bottle sold.

"It's a question of priorities. There are certain things that are different," said Jones. "I've made my money. Charity stuff is in a different category, so whenever I can give back, I take that opportunity. With the Charity Wines, we're giving disabled kids a chance to experience the game of baseball. It wasn't that big of a time commitment. It was an hour, and it was worth it to me."

HYATT PLACE

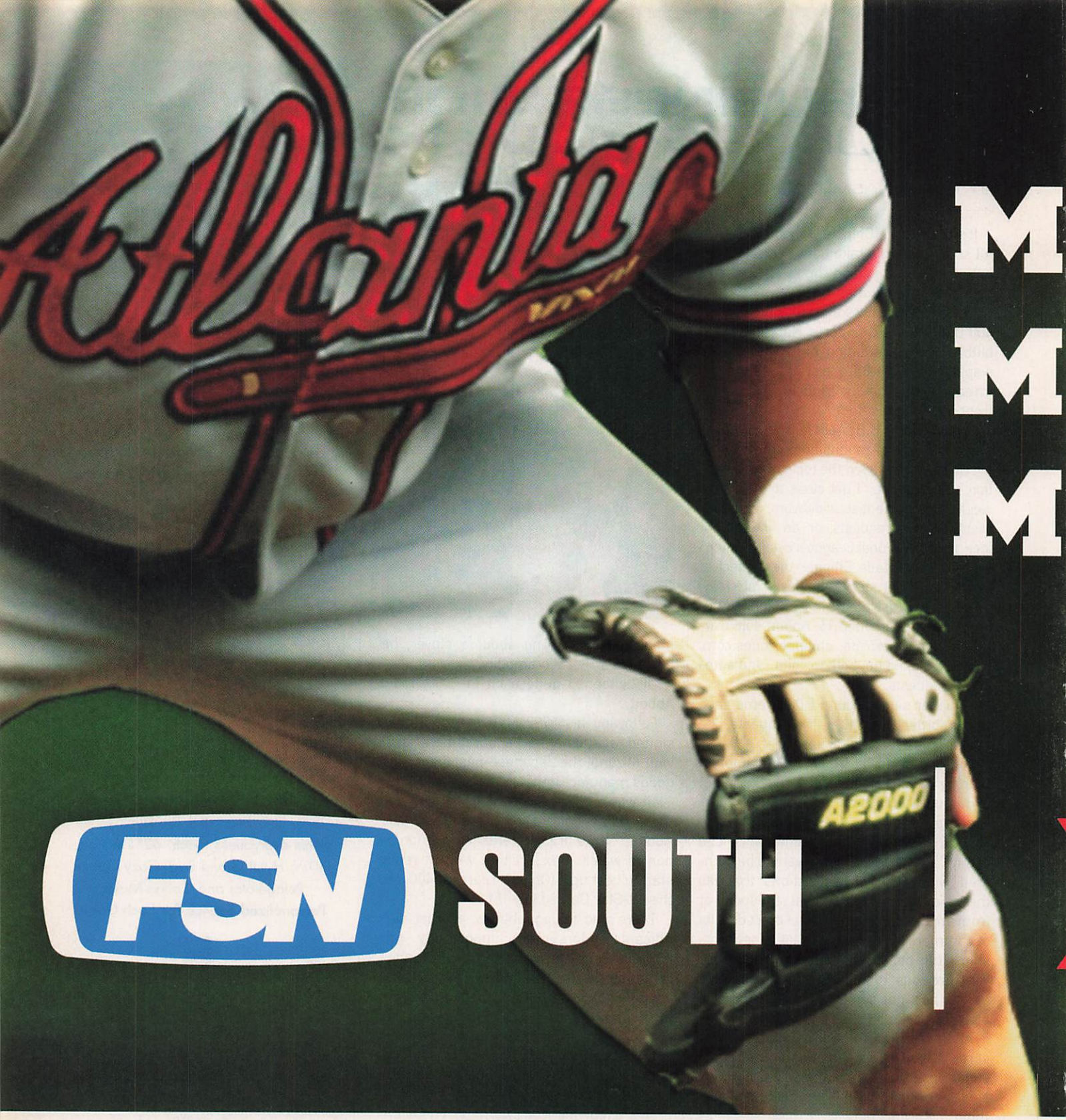
Downtown
Walk or free shuttle to restaurants, shops, attractions – 3 mile radius

24 Hour Food Service! • Specialty Wine and Beer Bar • Freshly prepared Snacks and Salads in our Bakery Cafe • Starbucks!

A **BRAND NEW** all suite hotel that puts style, innovation and The Hyatt Touch within everyones's reach. 42" Flat Panel HDTV, Hyatt Grand Bed, Cozy Corner, Refrigerator and Coffee Maker.
Personalized Service For Each Guest!

COMPLIMENTARY
• Deluxe Continental Breakfast
• Wi-Fi throughout Hotel
• Daily in-suite Coffee
• Computers and Printer in the Gallery
• Stay Fit Fitness Center
• Shuttle

404-577-1980 • Toll Free: 888-492-8847
or Book online at: www.hyattplace.com
330 Peachtree Street, N.E.
Atlanta, GA 30308



dish NETWORK

FSN ch.420 | SPSO ch.437

DIRE

FSN ch.630 |

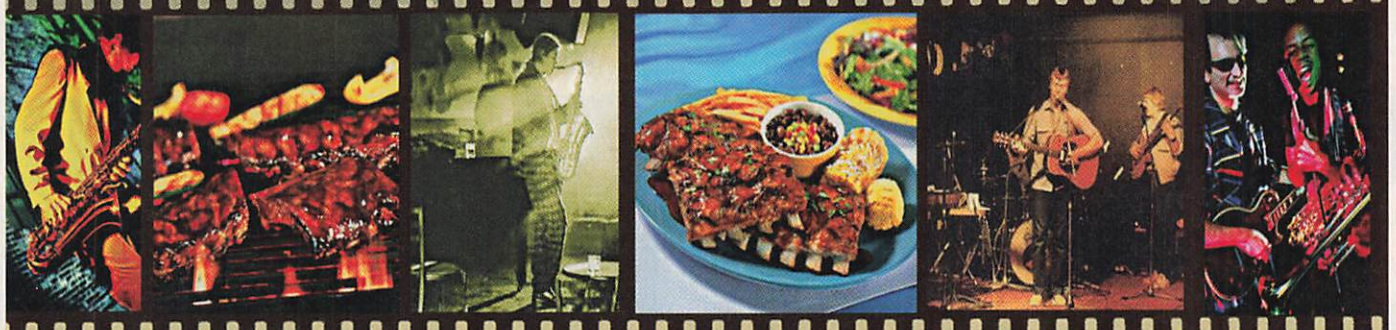
ECTV
SPSO ch.631

comcast
FSN ch.48 | SPSO ch.53 | HD ch.848
in metro Atlanta

Bullpen
BARBEQUE

Good Food. Good Times

South West Gate of **Turner Field**
735 Pollard BLVD • Atlanta, GA 30315
For more information: **404-577-5774**



Book your next party at the Bullpen.

KILLER RIBS & Smokin' Que

QUALITY
HOTEL DOWNTOWN ATLANTA
89 Luckie Street Atlanta, Ga. 30303

We invite you to enjoy all Atlanta has to offer-right outside our door!

Special Game Day Rates Starting At $59 AND UP

- Complimentary Continental Breakfast Bar
- Convenient to Braves MARTA Shuttle at Five Points Station
- 5 Minute Drive to Turner Field

404.524.7991
www.choicehotels.com

QUALITY

FOR GROUP RATES CALL OUR SALES DEPARTMENT AT **678.420.6441**

NOW OPEN

A cozy stay at a comfortable price®

COUNTRY INN & SUITES BY CARLSON

Across the Street from Home Plate Entrance!

759 Pollard Boulevard, Atlanta, Ga. 30315

404.658.1961 800.456.4000
www.countryinns.com

- Complimentary High-Speed-Wireless Internet Access
- Complimentary Deluxe Breakfast Bar
- Parking Included with Each Room
- Sparkling Clean New Rooms/Suites
- Bullpen Bar & Grill Next Door

Comfort INN | City Center at Turner Field

Comfort INN®

- 30 FEET FROM THE S.W. GATE!
- FREE GUEST PARKING
- COMPLIMENTARY, DELUXE CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST BAR

If location is everything,
we have everything you need on game day

404.658.1610

FOR GROUP RATES
CALL OUR SALES DEPT.
AT 404.658.1610

COMFORT INN CITY CENTER AT TURNER FIELD 795 POLLARD BLVD. ATLANTA, GA. 30315

LIVE IT. WATCH IT. LOVE IT.
04/03/2008 Watch LIVE games online on MLB.TV
LIVE
NEWS: 2008 promises to be a banner
GATE 6 SEC 19 BOX/ROW 285 D SEAT 5 PRICE $35.00
Braves
Visit BRAVES.com,
the official site for Braves fans, and
get more from the team you love.
LIVE Games, Fantasy, Tickets,
News, Stats and Authentic Gear.
braves.com™
Where baseball
is always on
©2008 MLB Advanced Media, L.P. All rights reserved. All Major League Baseball trademarks and service marks used herein are the property of the applicable MLB entity.

ETA

GLAVINE HOPES ELBOW WILL HEAL IN TIME FOR RETURN AROUND ALL-STAR BREAK

BY MARK BOWMAN OF MLB.COM

WHILE THE BRAVES are projecting that Tom Glavine could rejoin their starting rotation some time around the All-Star break, the 300-game winner doesn't know if that's a realistic probability.

But the fact that it's at least a possibility thrills Glavine, who learned on June 12 that the left elbow discomfort he's endured for more than a month has been a product of a small tear in his flexor tendon.

"When you hear the word 'tear', you think, 'Oh no, that's going to be a while,'" Glavine said. "Fortunately, right now I don't need surgery. I'm just happy that they didn't find something wrong with my ligament, because when you start talking about ligaments, you're talking about a career-threatening injury.

"I feel somewhat at peace because I knew something was wrong. I was pitching through pain for a month, and it wasn't getting better. I've always felt like I could get through this kind of thing. That's why this gives me some peace in knowing that what I was feeling was real."

On June 13, Frank Wren revealed that the MRI on Glavine the previous day showed this partial tear. At the same time, he indicated the team's medical staff set the All-Star break (July14-17) as a target for the 42-year-old lefty's return.

"There's no specific date, but sometime around the All-Star break or a little thereafter," said Wren, adding that Glavine simply needs to rest long enough to allow the injury to scar.

CHRISTOPHER SZAGOLA/CSM

Glavine began feeling elbow discomfort during his May 4 start against the Reds, and over the course of the next seven starts, the pain steadily got worse. The durable pitcher, who'd never been on the disabled list in his career before straining his right hamstring in April, reached his breaking point while allowing the Cubs four runs in just three innings on June 10.

Based on the amount of discomfort he's felt, Glavine currently thinks it might take more than a month for him to heal. But at the same time, he's hopeful that he's able to confirm the opinion of the doctors by getting back on the mound sometime around the All-Star break.

"I think it's optimistic," Glavine said. "But I don't know. Like with the hamstring strain, I didn't know because I'd never done that before. So, I just go with what the doctors tell me.

"There's really no exact science and no guarantees. I just have to be patient, do my thing, and hope that this thing settles down in the next 4-6 weeks."

Glavine, whose 305 career wins rank fourth among all left-handed pitchers in major league history, was just happy that the doctors didn't tell him his pain was being caused by a damaged ligament.

When Glavine returned to the Braves this season after spending the previous five with the Mets, it was assumed this year would be his last hoorah. But he's never said that, and even with this latest development, the ever-competitive athlete is still thinking about pitching in 2009.

Or at least, he's thankful that he doesn't currently have to talk about a surgery or injury that would prevent him from at least having the option to pitch again next year.

"A tear of the tendon isn't anything to sneeze at either," Glavine said. "But it's not as bad as a tear of the ligament. That's something that's career-ending. This might just set me back a few weeks or a month and allows me to pitch the second half of this year, and if I choose, also to have a chance to pitch next year, too."

If Glavine hasn't realized any improvement by the end of August or beginning of September, he says that he will at least evaluate the possibility of undergoing surgery with the purpose of giving himself a chance to pitch next year.

Glavine and John Smoltz have a friendship that dates back to July 1988, when they first were part of the Braves' starting rotation together. Twenty years later, both are beginning to endure the expected pains that follow a 40th birthday. But neither is inclined to let these latest setbacks allow them to start thinking about retirement.

"At this stage of our careers, we're not ready to just call it quits," Glavine said. "We're still competitive. But there will come a time when our body tells us it's time. When that time comes, I think we'll be able to say we've gotten as much out of our bodies as possible, and maybe even more."

It took Glavine 672 starts before he experienced what it was like to be on the disabled list. Although it lasted just two weeks, it's safe to say it was an experience that tested his stubborn determination.

Now Glavine finds himself knowing that he'll be sidelined longer than at any other time in his big league career that began in 1987. But at least for now, he's able to remain optimistic that this isn't the end of his career.

"It's another practice in patience," Glavine said. "So, we'll see how I do."

DON'T LEAVE FOR YOUR *Honeymoon*

- OR ANYWHERE ELSE - WITHOUT IT!

ChopTalk

THE OFFICIAL MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF THE ATLANTA BRAVES

SUBSCRIBE NOW
1-877-655-CHOP

ADDED BONUS!
10% OFF
YOUR NEXT MERCHANDISE PURCHASE FROM THE

Braves CLUBHOUSE COLLECTION

THIS PHOTO WAS SUBMITTED WITHOUT SOLICITATION BY CHOPTALK SUSCRIBERS RYAN & REGAN GOLDBERG FROM BONITA SPRINGS, FLA., AND WAS TAKEN ON THEIR WEDDING DAY

MAIL IT IN! SEND NAME, ADDRESS AND CHECK OR CARD INFO TO:
CHOPTALK
P.O. BOX 80750
CONYERS, GA
30013-8750

PHONE IT IN! 1.877.655.2467

ORDER ONLINE!
braves.com/choptalk

SUBSCRIBE NOW!

ChopTalk
THE OFFICIAL MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF THE ATLANTA BRAVES
1-877-655-2467

SEND TO:
NAME
ADDRESS APT. NO.
CITY STATE ZIP

BILL TO:
NAME
ADDRESS APT. NO.
CITY STATE ZIP

○ $37.95 1 YEAR (12 ISSUES)
○ $67.95 2 YEARS (24 ISSUES)

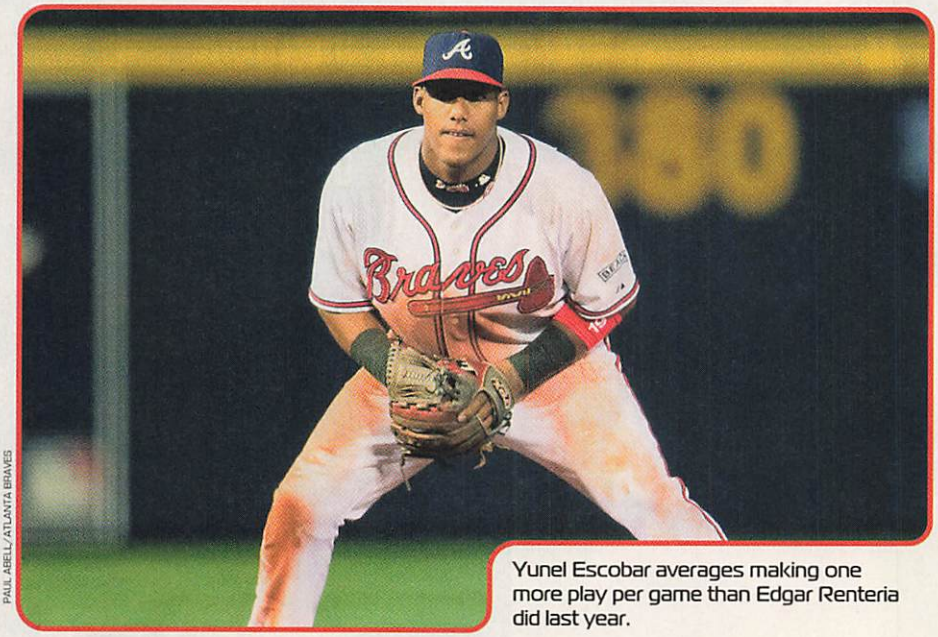
○ PLEASE CHECK IF THIS IS A RENEWAL.

TO AVOID HASSLE AND MAXIMIZE SAVINGS, I AUTHORIZE CONTINUATION OF THIS SUBSCRIPTION WITHOUT INTERRUPTION. BEFORE EACH NEW TERM, I WILL RECEIVE AN INVOICE. IF I PAY BY CHECK, OR IF I PAY BY CREDIT CARD, I WILL RECEIVE A NOTICE THAT MY ACCOUNT WILL BE CHARGED AT THE LOWEST AVAILABLE RATE, IF I DECIDE TO CANCEL AT ANYTIME, I'LL RECEIVE A REFUND FOR ALL UNMAILED ISSUES.

○ PAYMENT ENCLOSED
○ BILL MY CREDIT CARD
○ MC ○ VISA ○ AMEX ○ DISCOVER
CC# EXP.

$37.95 1 YEAR (12 ISSUES)
$67.95 2 YEARS (24 ISSUES)

ESCOBAR'S RANGE IS BEST IN THE LEAGUE



PAUL ABELL/ATLANTA BRAVES

Yunel Escobar averages making one more play per game than Edgar Renteria did last year.

BY STEVE FALL

SINCE JOINING the Braves last June, Yunel Escobar had seen approximately one full season of playing time: 593 plate appearances in 148 games played. He's delivered a .313 batting average and .376 on-base percentage in that time frame. Among shortstops with at least 500 career plate appearances with the team, both those figures rank number-one in franchise history.

Only two other Braves shortstops had .300 career batting averages with the club. Edgar Renteria, who Escobar replaced at short, owns the next-highest average (.310). Walter Barbare hit .302 while playing short for the 1921 Boston Braves.

Escobar's .376 on-base percentage edges Renteria (.374) and Dave "Beauty" Bancroft (.373 in 1924-27) for the Braves' highest career figure ever by a shortstop. His .426 slugging percentage tops all except Renteria (.451).

However, Escobar has gobbled up almost all the balls hit his way this season, showing improved range over Renteria. The 25-year-old from Cuba had a fantastic 5.10 range factor.

Calculated by dividing successful defensive plays (putouts plus assists) by innings and multiplying by nine, range factor shows how much ground a player covers. Although he made only 11 errors last season, Renteria had just a 4.19 range factor. Escobar has made nearly one extra play per game, which adds up to a huge difference over a long season.

None of the current NL shortstops approach Escobar's 5.10 range factor. Cesar Izturis of the Cardinals comes next at 4.51, followed by Milwaukee's J.J. Hardy (4.36). The 2007 NL Gold Glove winner at shortstop, Jimmy Rollins of the Phillies, captured that award with a 4.41 range factor.

Escobar had committed five errors this season. His .981 fielding percentage placed him fifth among the 10 NL shortstops that had played at least two-thirds of their team's games. He also tied for the fifth in doubleplays (29).

AFTER TWO down seasons, the Braves' starting rotation has bounced back in 2008. Their 3.72 earned run average (through June 1) topped every National League team except the Diamondbacks. Considering that NL starting rotations were averaging a 4.51 ERA this season, the Braves' starters were performing far above the norm for Bobby Cox.

After 15 years of sustained excellence, the Atlanta rotation slipped in 2006 and 2007. Last season, their 4.45 ERA placed seventh in the NL. In 2006, their 4.71 figure ranked ninth. Those two seasons also marked the only times since 1991 that the club missed the post-season.

The 2008 Braves rotation seems like an odd group to rank among the NL's best. John Smoltz, who turned 41 in May, made just five starts before shoulder problems sent him to the DL and eventually to surgery. Tom Glavine is a year older than Smoltz. Jair Jurrjens entered this season with seven career starts. Jo-Jo Reyes had a 6.22 as a rookie in 2007.

Two months into the season, Cox had already used eight different starters. But collectively they had come through in fine fashion. Opposing hitters were batting only .247 against them, which also led every club except Arizona.

With Smoltz likely out for the season, the burden falls on Tim Hudson (7-4, 3.01 ERA) and the 22-year-old Jurrjens (5-3, 3.45 ERA) to continue their strong pitching.

The rotation had fallen short in one respect this season. With 5.56 innings pitched per start, they had not pitched deep into many games. Only three NL rotations were averaging fewer innings per outing.

However, the starting staff made up for that shortcoming with quality. The team had given up only 141 runs during the first six innings of ballgames – an average of just 2.47 runs per game. Meanwhile, the Braves' offense had scored 187 times during those first six innings (3.28 runs per game). So, the starters usually gave the club a chance for victory.

If the starting staff continues to pitch well, the team's post-season chances increase dramatically. Aside from 2003 when the Braves placed seventh in starters' ERA, they finished in the top three of this category every other year they won their 14 straight division titles.

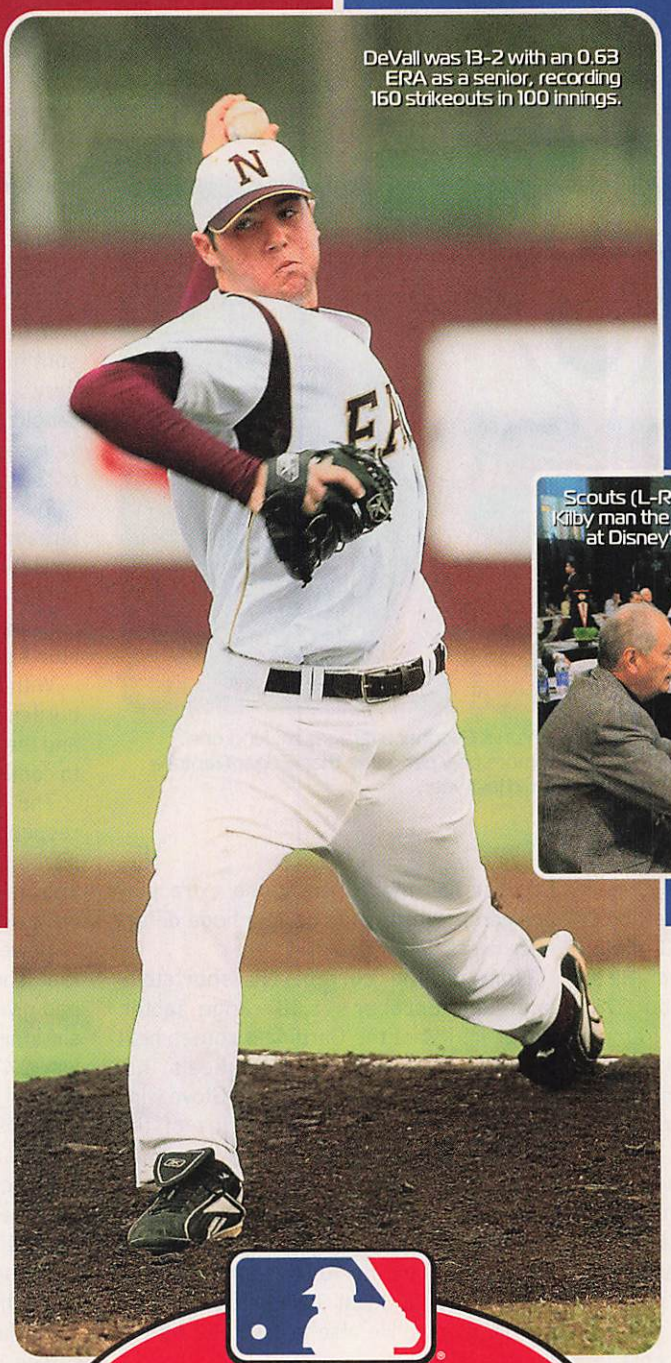
Few teams reach the post-season without a solid rotation. The Phillies qualified last year despite a 4.91 ERA by their starters that placed 12th. But they overcame that by leading the league in runs scored. Although they have a good offense, the 2008 Braves lack that kind of firepower.

Seven of the past eight World Series champions have ranked in the top five of their league in starters ERA. The 2006 Cardinals, who finished 12th, were the only exception.

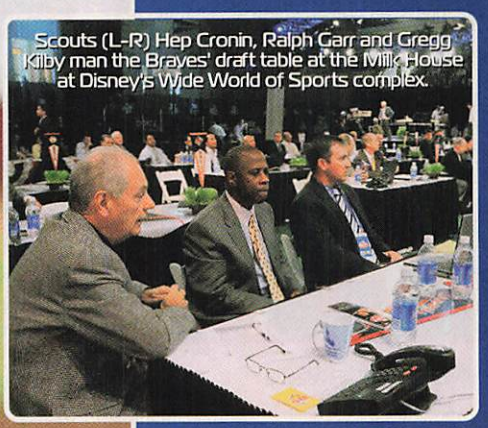
A strong rotation does not guarantee a playoff spot, but it is usually a prerequisite.

TOP PICK

LEFTHANDER BRETT DEVALL PROJECTS AS FUTURE MEMBER OF STARTING ROTATION



DeVall was 13-2 with an 0.63 ERA as a senior, recording 160 strikeouts in 100 innings.



Scouts (L-R) Hep Cronin, Ralph Garr and Gregg Kilby man the Braves' draft table at the Milk House at Disney's Wide World of Sports complex.

DEVALL: NORTHWEST FLORIDA DAILY NEWS. DRAFT TABLE: DISNEY

BY BRIAN KNAPP

SCOUTING director Roy Clark did not expect Brett DeVall to be available when the Braves made their first selection (40th overall) in the Major League Baseball First-Year Player Draft on June 5. With 39 players off the market before Atlanta had its first pick, Clark felt certain another organization would be introducing the lefthander when the draft was over.

Instead, DeVall fell into Atlanta's lap, and the Braves landed a player they coveted from the beginning, a prospect that commands three pitches and might someday anchor their rotation.

"Every team likes different type guys," Clark said. "I'm sure the teams who passed on Brett thought the guys they picked had more potential, and they might be right. I was delighted to select him. He's a wonderful kid who comes from a wonderful family."

DeVall went 13-2 with a miniscule 0.63 earned run average as a senior, leading Niceville High School (Fla.) to the state semifinals for the first time in 19 years. He recorded 160 strikeouts in 100 innings and strung together 18 consecutive scoreless innings during his team's playoff run. An Aflac All-American as a junior, DeVall was rated by Baseball America as the top left-handed high school pitcher in the draft.

The 18-year-old was at a draft party hosted by longtime friend and teammate Josh McDorman when he heard his name called on ESPN. The moment was surreal.

"It didn't really sink in right away," DeVall said. "I don't know if it hits you until you look back on it a few days later, but it was a relief knowing all that hard work had paid off. Hearing that it was the Braves made it that much better. Their organization is known for developing pitchers."

Niceville High School head coach Kevin Berry – a man who has known DeVall since he was 12 years old – thinks the Braves got a steal.

"You're talking about a high school kid, at 91-92 miles per hour from the left side, who can put his pitches in a snuff cup," said Berry, who has a background in sports management and was an assistant coach at the University of Alabama. "He competes on every pitch, and he's about as smooth as they get. I think he'll be in the big leagues in two or three years. Not only did the Braves

get a top 15 player, but they saved a few million dollars, too."

DeVall has committed to play collegiately at the University of Georgia but does not plan to follow the path traveled by Josh Fields, Atlanta's second-round pick in 2007. Fields elected to remain at Georgia rather than sign.

"I'm signing with the Braves," DeVall said. "When the Braves made me their first pick, that pretty much solidified it. It's always been a dream of mine to have a career in the big leagues, and I'm eager to get started. I want to compete against other professionals and hopefully work my way up."

DeVall – whose father, Lowell, played minor league ball in the Washington Senators farm system – was the 18th pitcher and sixth lefthander chosen in the draft. His makeup, physical attributes and mental approach to the game made him an ideal fit for Atlanta. DeVall was shaped by the East Cobb Baseball program in Marietta, Ga., an amateur program that also proved pivotal in the development of current Braves reliever Blaine Boyer and one-time Atlanta pitchers Kyle Davies and Kyle Farnsworth.

"He's been a strong fixture in that East Cobb program for years," Clark said. "He was facing top competition, and he was basically the number one pitcher. He's got a big, strong body that can eat up a lot of innings. Is he going to throw 100 on the gun? Probably not, but he's got three pitches, and he's our kind of guy."

Clark expects DeVall to thrive in an organization that built its legacy on molding young arms, though he cautions to expect bumps in the road.

"He certainly has the aptitude and work ethic to be successful," Clark said. "He's done everything he's been asked to do, and right now, he's a very polished pitcher. But every 18-year-old kid faces tremendous challenges in making this transition."

DeVall met with Braves general manager Frank Wren and Bobby Cox at Turner Field the day after he was chosen. He relishes the opportunity to follow in the footsteps of future Hall-of-Famers like John Smoltz and Tom Glavine, both of whom were already in the big leagues before he was born. He knows that won't come without a lot of work, though.

"I need to get stronger and sharpen all my pitches," DeVall said. "My goal is to be the most successful pitcher I can be, to be able to pitch at Turner Field, do the best I can and hopefully help the Braves win another World Series."

2008 ATLANTA BRAVES DRAFT
BY ROUND

ROUND	PICK	PLAYER	POSITION	SCHOOL
COMP. A	40	BRETT DEVALL	LHP	NICEVILLE HIGH SCHOOL (FLA.)
2	64	ROBERT STOVALL	LHP	HOKES BLUFF HIGH SCHOOL (ALA.)
2	70	EZEKIEL SPRUILL	RHP	KELL HIGH SCHOOL (GA.)
3	96	CRAIG KIMBREL	RHP	WALLACE STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE (ALA.)
4	130	BRAEDEN SCHLEHUBER	C	COLLEGE OF SOUTHERN NEVADA
5	160	JACOB THOMPSON	RHP	UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA
6	190	ADAM MILLIGAN	OF	WALTERS STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE (TENN.)
7	220	PAUL CLEMENS	RHP	LOUISBURG COLLEGE (N.C.)
8	250	BRETT OBERHOLTZER	LHP	SEMINOLE COMMUNITY COLLEGE (FLA.)
9	280	KYLE FARRELL	RHP	WESTERN NEVADA COMMUNITY COLLEGE
10	310	JAMES HOOVER	RHP	CALHOUN COMMUNITY COLLEGE (ALA.)
11	340	RICHARD SULLIVAN	LHP	SAVANNAH COLLEGE OF ART & DESIGN (GA.)
12	370	ROSS FRANCIS	RHP	WALTERS STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE (TENN.)
13	400	TRAVIS ADAIR	SS	CLEVELAND STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE (TENN.)
14	430	JASON HANSON	3B	SABINO HIGH SCHOOL (ARIZ.)
15	460	WILLIAM HILLER	OF	BLINN COLLEGE (TEX.)
16	490	BILLY BURNS	OF	WALTON HIGH SCHOOL (GA.)
17	520	MARK POPE	RHP	WALTON HIGH SCHOOL (GA.)
18	550	MICHAEL PALAZZONE	RHP	LASSITER HIGH SCHOOL (GA.)
19	580	ZACHARY FUESSER	LHP	YORK COMPREHENSIVE HIGH SCHOOL (S.C.)
20	610	ROBERT BROOKS	SS	LURLEEN B. WALLACE STATE JUNIOR COLLEGE (ALA.)
21	640	TYLER BARNETT	SS	EASTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY
22	670	BRYAN CARTER	3B	TEXAS A & M UNIVERSITY
23	700	DANIEL HODGES	RHP	MOUNT OLIVE COLLEGE (N.C.)
24	730	SHANE MOODY	SS	UNC CHARLOTTE
25	760	NICHOLAS FULLER	RHP	WALTERS STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE (TENN.)
26	790	CALVIN CULVER	OF	LOS ANGELES PIERCE COLLEGE
27	820	ANTHONY RENDON	SS	LAMAR HIGH SCHOOL (TEXAS)
28	850	QUENTIN CATE	C	CUESTA COLLEGE (CALIF.)
29	880	JOSH MOODY	LHP	WESTERN NEVADA COMMUNITY COLLEGE
30	910	CHRIS SHEHAN	OF	GEORGIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY
31	940	JASON STOLZ	SS	KELL HIGH SCHOOL (GA.)
32	970	PAT LENTON	RHP	MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY MANKATO
33	1,000	JUSTIN FOWLER	RHP	TEXARKANA COMMUNITY COLLEGE (TEX.)
34	1,030	MATTHEW PRICE	RHP	THE WALKER SCHOOL (GA.)
35	1,060	ZACK OSBORNE	RHP	NEW MEXICO JUNIOR COLLEGE
36	1,090	BERRY TANNER	RHP	WARE COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL (GA.)
37	1,120	LUCAS HILEMAN	OF	ANNA-JONESBORO HIGH SCHOOL (ILL.)
38	1,150	RICHARD JEFFREY	RHP	COASTAL CAROLINA UNIVERSITY (S.C.)
39	1,180	TAYLOR WULF	RHP	ALVIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE (TEX.)
40	1,210	JESSE WIERZBICKI	C	WALTERS STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE (TENN.)
41	1,240	IAN GILLEY	SS	NORTHSIDE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL (ARK.)
42	1,270	STEPHEN FOSTER	LHP	BELLEVUE COMMUNITY COLLEGE (WASH.)
43	1,300	ADAM BULLARD	RHP	GARDNER-WEBB UNIVERSITY (N.C.)
44	1,330	TAYLOR HART	RHP	MADISON COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL (GA.)
45	1,358	NICK CROCE	C	MISSION BAY HIGH SCHOOL (CALIF.)
46	1,385	MATT HARRISON	SS	GREEN VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL (NEV.)
47	1,412	DAVID WALTERS	RHP	FRANCIS MARION UNIVERSITY (S.C.)
48	1,439	DAVID HOLMAN	RHP	ANDALE HIGH SCHOOL (KAN.)
49	1,466	JOSHUA ADAMS	RHP	MIDLAND VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL (S.C.)
50	1,493	DYLAN LIGHTELL	RHP	WEST HILLS COLLEGE (CALIF.)

ARMS BUILDUP

CLASS OF NEW RECRUITS HEAVILY STOCKED WITH PITCHING TALENT

BY BRIAN KNAPP

DRAFT 2008

THE BRAVES kept with tradition in the Major League Baseball First-Year Player Draft on June 5-6, using 31 of their 51 selections on pitchers. In fact, the team's first four choices and 11 of its first 13 were dedicated to arms.

Atlanta's draft philosophy has undergone little change in the past two decades, according to scouting director Roy Clark.

"If you look at our history, you probably get the same thing out of other drafts," Clark said. "If the right position player's there, we'll take him. But if it comes down to a vote, we usually go with pitching. You keep pounding pitching because you can never have enough. [Former director of scouting and player development and Braves Hall of Famer] Paul Snyder once told me you've got to sign 20 [pitchers] to get two good major leaguers."

Blake DeVall, a polished left-handed pitcher out of Niceville High School (Fla.) heads Atlanta's 2008 draft class. The 6-foot-3, 215-pound 18-year-old already has a major league body upon which to build and commands three pitches – slider, changeup and fastball that touches the low 90s. The Braves, who surrendered their first-round pick to the Mets as compensation for signing Tom Glavine, did not choose until the supplemental round (40th overall).

Atlanta followed its selection of DeVall with two more high school pitchers, picking Robert Stovall (60th overall) out of Hokes Bluff High School (Ala.) and Ezekiel Spruill (70th overall) out of Kell High School in Marietta, Ga., with their two second-round selections.

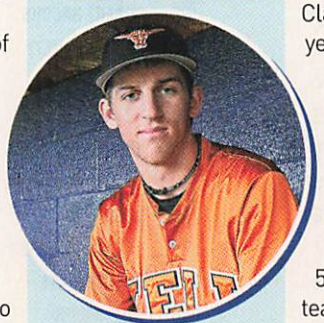
Stovall, a 6-foot-1 lefthander who was named Alabama's Mr. Baseball for 2008, holds state records for career victories (54) and strikeouts (683). He went 14-1 with 198 strikeouts in 91 innings as a senior, leading Hokes Bluff to its sixth consecutive state championship. He pitched three no-hitters and six shutouts and has committed to play collegiately at Auburn University.

"We hope we got a big leaguer," Clark said. "We're very confident that if we get him signed and he enters our system, he'll be on track to be a major leaguer."

Spruill may have the greatest upside. The lanky righthander has a fastball that consistently reaches into the mid 90s, though command remains a question mark. Spruill scored a 1,520 on the SAT and, like DeVall, has committed to the University of Georgia. Baseball America rated him the No. 44 prospect in the country.

"He has an outstanding makeup," Clark said. "We do a tremendous amount of work on makeup. That's one area where we don't want to miss."

ROBERT STOVALL



EZEKIEL SPRUILL

CRAIG KIMBREL

JACOB THOMPSON

Atlanta took University of Virginia pitcher Jacob Thompson in round five (160th overall). The 6-foot-6 righthander was a unanimous first-team All-American selection in 2007, when he was 11-0 with a 1.50 earned run average for the Cavaliers. His production fell sharply as a junior (6-4, 4.30 ERA), as did his stock.

In addition to the 31 pitchers they picked, the Braves selected eight shortstops, six outfielders, four catchers and a pair of third baseman. They did not draft a position player until they chose College of Southern Nevada catcher Braeden Schlehuber in the fourth round (130th overall). They took 19 high school players and 32 from colleges and junior colleges.

"We're absolutely thrilled with the guys we got," Clark said, "but we're not going to know for four or five years what type of major league players we have."

The Braves continued to invest in local talent, spending nearly 20 percent of their picks on players with ties to the state of Georgia.

They included Spruill and fellow Kell High School alum Jason Stolz (31st round, 940th overall), Walton High School teammates Billy Burns (16th round, 490th overall) and Mark Pope (17th round, 520th overall), Walters State Community College teammates Nicholas Fuller (25th round, 760th overall) and Jesse Wierzbicki (40th round, 1,210th overall), The Walker School pitcher Matthew Price (34th round, 1,030th overall), and Ware County High School pitcher Berry Tanner (36th round, 1,090th overall). They also landed Lassiter High School righthander Michael Palazzone (18th round, 550th overall) and Madison County High School pitcher Taylor Hart (44th round, 1,330th overall).

Atlanta plucked Jeff Francoeur (first round, 2002), Brian McCann (second round, 2002) and Blaine Boyer (third round, 2000) out of Georgia's fertile amateur baseball grounds, and they spent their first-round selection in 2007 on first baseman Jason Heyward. A graduate of Henry County High School in McDonough, Ga., Heyward ranked third in the Class A South Atlantic League in batting (.332) and 10th in slugging percentage (.504) through his first 60 games with the Class-A Rome Braves.

Clark admits having a hotbed of talent in his own backyard has its perks.

"It's priceless for me, because I live here," he said. "But it isn't like the other teams don't have access to the same players we do. There are 29 other teams who can sit all summer for 12- to 15-hour days just like the Braves can."

STOVALL: THE GADSDEN MESSENGER; SPRUILL: LAURA MOON OF THE MARIETTA DAILY JOURNAL; KIMBREL: WALLACE STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE; THOMPSON: JIM DAVIES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

ROME'S CODY JOHNSON BLASTS TAPE MEASURE HOME RUN

BASEBALL "LIFERS" are adamant they see something different every time they go to the ballpark. That was the case for Rome manager Randy Ingle and Asheville manager Joe Mikulik on May 23 when their two teams met for the finale of a four-game South Atlantic League series at McCormick Field in Asheville.

The Braves' Cody Johnson hit a solo home run with one out in the 11th inning to help propel Rome to victory. While such a feat is routine in the big picture, Johnson's home run was no ordinary home run. In fact, both Ingle and Mikulik, who combined have more than 55 years of experience in the professional ranks, agreed that Johnson's blast was the longest they've ever seen.

"That was one for the ages," Ingle said. "I've seen him hit some balls that you just wonder how anyone can hit it that far. But that one was the furthest I think I've ever seen."

BILL BALLEW

Leftfielder Cody Johnson leads Rome in home runs (9) but also is on a record-setting strikeout pace.

McCormick Field was constructed in 1924 prior to being rebuilt after the 1991 season. The field has remained in the same spot during that time, a period in which only one player - Bob Robertson in 1966 - ever hit a ball onto the football field above the ballpark. Johnson matched that feat on May 23, with Jason McGill of the Asheville Citizen-Times measuring the shot at 515 feet. Robertson, by the way, played 11 seasons in the majors, mainly with Pittsburgh, hitting 115 career home runs.

"This is my ninth season (as Asheville's manager), and I've never seen anyone get close to hitting one up there," Mikulik said.

Johnson, meanwhile, is always on the search for reaching new heights with his titanic home runs. Said the Rome leftfielder, "I've always played the game using the philosophy to swing hard in case you hit it."

IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT to find a more impressive transformation among any minor league player this season than the one undergone by Myrtle Beach righthander **Ryne Reynoso**. Two years ago during his senior year at Boston College, Reynoso spent the vast majority of his time as an outfielder. Yet thanks to the astute evaluating eyes of scout **Lonnie Goldberg**, Reynoso has emerged as a prospect and a key component for the Pelicans, first-half champions of the Carolina League's Southern Division.

Reynoso was a surprise addition to the Myrtle Beach rotation and opened the season by allowing four earned runs in each of his first two starts. He settled down shortly thereafter, surrendering a total of 15 earned runs over his next 11 starts, totaling 60 innings. Overall, the righthander owned a 6-4 record with a 3.09 ERA while giving up only 59 hits in 67 innings.

Two years ago, the thought that Reynoso would be pitching for pay was little more than an idea rolling around in the back of Goldberg's mind. He saw Reynoso throw during pre-game drills as a collegian and convinced Atlanta scouting director **Roy Clark** to take a flier on the would-be pitcher in the 26th round in 2006. From there, Reynoso reported to Cortland in the summer New York Collegiate Baseball League, where head coach **Joe Brown** agreed to let him close games in order to display his repertoire.

"Ryno had three things that really stood out," Goldberg said. "He had a great arm, a major league body, and great makeup. He then proved that summer he had the ability to pitch. He just didn't know how to harness it."

Reynoso earned a spot in the Rome bullpen in 2007 for his first taste of pro ball and responded by posting a 3-4 record and a 1.98 ERA with nine saves in 40 games. He even made a two-game appearance at Myrtle Beach, which is where he returned this spring.

"The hardest part came in the first half last year," Reynoso said. "It took a while to get used to going out there every time as a pitcher. I walked a lot of guys early last year before I finally started to get comfortable in the second half."

Goldberg believes the Braves made a wise decision in moving Reynoso to the rotation this year.

"I admit I'm surprised at how much success he's had in such a short period," Goldberg said. "He'll tell you the same thing. But it's a great example of what ability, makeup and hard work can accomplish when everything comes together. Ryno's very smart, he has great ability, and he has a great chance to pitch in the big leagues as long as he continues to throw strikes."

Reynoso was named the Carolina League Pitcher of the Week on June 2 after posting a pair of victories and allowing only one earned run and striking out nine over 12 innings.

RICHMOND
TRIPLE A

CHARLIE MORTON has been one of the brightest spots in the organization this season. The righthander improved to 5-1 by allowing only one hit and a walk while striking out 13 in eight strong innings to defeat Durham, 7-0, on June 3. On June 8, his scoreless innings streak reached 20 prior to

PROSPECTS BY POSITION

C	**CLINT SAMMONS**, 25 RICHMOND
1B	**FREDDIE FREEMAN**, 18 ROME
2B	**DIORY HERNANDEZ**, 24 RICHMOND
3B	**VAN POPE**, 24 MISSISSIPPI
SS	**BRANDON HICKS**, 22 MYRTLE BEACH
LF	**BRANDON JONES**, 24 RICHMOND
CF	**JORDAN SCHAFER**, 21 MISSISSIPPI
RF	**JASON HEYWARD**, 18 ROME
RHP	**TOMMY HANSON**, 21 MISSISSIPPI.
LHP	**COLE ROHRBOUGH**, 21 ROME
CL	**LUIS VALDEZ**, 24 MISSISSIPPI

surrendering a season-high four earned runs in his self-proclaimed "bad" outing. The key to Morton's success has been his positive outlook that includes having the confidence his pitches are good enough to get batters out at higher levels. His 2.05 ERA ranked second in the International League at the time of his promotion to Atlanta...

The Braves signed veteran righthander **Brian Lawrence** on June 9 and assigned the 32-year-old to Richmond. Lawrence, who was 50-63 with the Padres and Mets from 2001-05, was known as an innings eater prior to missing all of 2006 due to surgery on his rotator cuff and labrum. He returned to make six starts for the Mets, as well as 16 starts in Triple-A during 2007. He was pitching for Camden in the independent Atlantic League and had a 2-2 record and a 3.21 ERA in eight starts prior to signing with Atlanta...

The Braves released reliever **Scott Williamson** when pitcher **Chris Resop** was sent to Richmond after being designated for assignment by Atlanta and clearing waivers in late May...

Richmond ranked next-to-last in home runs in the International League but has started to show more power of late. One of the surprise contributors is middle infielder **Diory Hernandez**, whose quick bat enables him to drive the ball to all fields. A free swinger, he has six home runs this year, including four for the R-Braves. Even so, he ranked second in the organization with a .309 batting average through June 12...

Also giving Richmond more pop is the addition of outfielder **Jason Perry**. The former Georgia Tech standout hit a home run in his first game with Richmond, on May 30, after being promoted from Mississippi. He had five multi-hit games in his first 10 with the R-Braves, and was leading the organization with 15 home runs and 46 RBIs through June 12...

Shortstop **Brent Lillibridge** has tried to fight through a season-long slump at the plate, the first of his career. Lillibridge hit .195 in April and .200 in May prior to starting June in a 4-for-34 funk. Said Lillibridge, "I feel like this is a big time for me to grow as a ballplayer and a person. How I face adversity and bounce back will be a big thing."...

Outfielder **Reggie Taylor** is trying to work his way back to the big leagues and opened June by going 12-for-32 (.375) with two homers and seven RBIs. The veteran of 260 games in the majors last played there in 2005. The 31-year-old Taylor also has served as a mentor, particularly to outfielder Brandon Jones...

Brandon Jones missed nine games in early June with a strained right lat muscle. Inconsistent at the plate, he looked better upon returning from the injury, collecting five RBIs in his first three games, leading to a promotion to Atlanta on June 11...

The R-Braves have two of the better defensive catchers in the minor leagues. **Sal Fasano** threw out 15 of the first 25 baserunners attempting to steal this season for a whopping 60 percent success rate. **Clint Sammons**, the Richmond starter, nailed 13 of 54 for a solid 35.2 percent.

MISSISSIPPI
DOUBLE A

JORDAN SCHAFER returned to the Mississippi lineup on June 2 after missing 50 games due to a suspension for possession of a banned substance. Schafer, who played only four games with the M-Braves at the beginning of the season before being suspended, singled and tripled in his first game back. During his suspension, Schafer participated in extended spring training with the Braves in Orlando. "It's nice to get everything behind me, out of the way and just having a clear head and being able to go out and play," said Schafer, who was greeted warmly upon his return while making his debut at Trustmark Park. Schafer hit safely in his first five games back, including two home runs versus Mobile on June 6...

After opening the season on the wrong end of the linescore in 15 of their initial 17 games, the M-Braves showed steady improvement, going (26-24) over their next 50 games. A major reason for the turnaround is the performance of the starting pitchers...

Todd Redmond has been a bright spot in Mississippi with his ability to locate his fastball and get ahead of hitters in the count. Acquired from the Pirates in spring training for **Tyler Yates**, Redmond has been the M-Braves' most consistent starter throughout the season's first half, going 6-2 while posting seven quality starts in his first 13 outings...

Tommy Hanson has pitched well since being promoted from Myrtle Beach on May 11. Hanson had one poor outing, allowing eight earned runs in 2 2/3 innings on May 18, but owned a 2.81 ERA in his six other starts...

Also aiding the rotation has been the recent move of **Kris Medlen** from a reliever to a starter. Another boost has been the return of **Carlos Sencion** from the disabled list on June 2...

Dan Smith, the M-Braves' Opening Day starter, was released on June 11. Smith had a difficult second half last year at Richmond and continued to struggle with his command this season at Mississippi...

Jerome Gamble, a former Boston prospect who was signed by the Braves over the winter out of an independent league, has made a seamless shift from the bullpen to the rotation. Gamble took a no-hitter into the seventh inning in his third start, on May 24 versus Tennessee, yet suffered the loss in four of five outings before picking up his first victory on June 4 against Birmingham...

Third baseman **Van Pope**, who had back-

CLASS A ALL-STARS

ROME/SOUTH ATLANTIC LEAGUE	
JASON HEYWARD	OF
FREDDIE FREEMAN	1B
MYRTLE BEACH/CAROLINA LEAGUE	
BRANDON HICKS	SS
TRAVIS JONES	2B
ERNESTO MEJIA	1B
DEUNTE HEATH	RHP
RYNE DUMESNIL	RHP
RYNE REYNOSO	RHP
ROCKET WHEELER	MANAGER
RICK ALBERT	HITTING COACH
MIKE ALVAREZ	PITCHING COACH
WILL MORIN	TRAINER

to-back stints on the disabled list with an injured left hamstring that caused him to miss nearly a month, from April 19-May 15, was benched on June 2 after failing to run out a popup. Pope returned to the lineup a night later and provided the game-winning hit in the 13th inning to lead Mississippi to its first victory over the Barons in 10 tries this season. Pope has looked better at the plate after a miserable 2007...

Reliever **Luis Valdez** has been untouchable of late. He did not allow an earned run in 21 straight outings, a span of 24 1/3 innings, and lowered his ERA from 12.60 to 2.15. Valdez also paced the M-Braves with 10 saves, second in the organization...

Slow starts are a fact of life for first baseman **Kala Ka'aihue**. The Hawaiian provided little power during the season's first two months before showing signs of life as the weather warmed. KK finished May hitting .216 but had five homers and 19 RBIs during the month. He started June 10-for-28 at the plate to increase his average to .236.

MYRTLE BEACH
ADVANCED A

JON MARK OWINGS rebounded from a slow start by putting together a 10-game hitting streak in late May and early June. He capped the Pelicans' seven-run rally with a grand slam to tie the game in the eighth inning on June 3 in a 10-7 win over Winston-Salem. During his hot streak, Owings posted a .424 batting average...

Kyle Cofield is making a name for himself. Through June 5, he allowed only one earned run over five starts, a span of 27 2/3 innings, to lower his ERA to 2.56. Cofield, an eighth-round pick in 2005, went 2-0 during his five starts, and contributed mightily to the Pelicans' run of 15 wins in 16 games to wrap up the first-half Southern Division crown...

Ernesto Mejia extended his hitting streak to 13 games on June 11 and reached base safely in 26 straight games prior to an 0-for-4 outing versus Salem on June 12. Mejia also had a 13-game hitting streak before failing to get a hit on May 29...

The Braves activated third baseman **Eric Campbell** from the suspended list on May 27. Campbell was suspended by the organization for unspecified reasons during the waning days of spring training and missed most of the first two months of the regular season. He looked rusty upon his return, yet still managed to hit safely in nine of 10 games from June 2-11 and hit home runs in three straight games, June 5-7, accumulat-

SCOTT DIAMOND

MY CAREER HAS MADE A TOTAL TURNAROUND

EDITOR'S NOTE

Undrafted out of Binghamton (N.Y.) University, left-hander Scott Diamond signed with Atlanta last August after his second stint in the collegiate Coastal Plain League. He immediately impressed the Braves in Instructional League before earning a job at Class-A Rome to open this season. After going 3-1 with a 3.08 ERA in nine starts, the 21-year-old Canadian was promoted to advanced Class-A Myrtle Beach in late May and has continued to pitch well.

FOR THE PAST 12 MONTHS, everything has seemed surreal. Last year at this time, I was playing in the Coastal Plain League. It was just after the draft, and I didn't know what I was going to do. The summer wound up going well, and now I'm pitching in Myrtle Beach. The past year - and this season in particular - has been an unbelievable experience.

My baseball career has undergone a complete turnaround. Last year during the break for the Coastal Plain League All-Star Game, I visited a buddy of mine who lives in Myrtle Beach. We drove by the ballpark, and he told me that's where the high-A Braves play. I remember looking at the facility from the outside and being amazed at how nice everything looked. Now to actually be on the inside and pitching here is beyond anything I can explain. It's all been a whirlwind of events, something I never envisioned taking place.

At Binghamton University, we weren't known for baseball. It's actually a pretty small school. On an average game, we'd have a hundred, maybe 200 fans watching. In my first start in high-A, there were 8,600 fans in the stands at Frederick (Md.). It was quite overwhelming, to be honest. But it was great pitching in an atmosphere like that, and hopefully it's just one experience I'll remember on my trip to the big leagues.

> "THE PAST YEAR - AND THIS SEASON IN PARTICULAR - HAS BEEN AN UNBELIEVABLE EXPERIENCE."

Several people have asked what's been the difference for me, but I really feel like I haven't changed that much in the way I pitch. The main thing I concentrate on is to change speeds and vary my pitches from count to count and batter to batter. I had success in the Coastal Plain League both years, and that might have opened some eyes.

I had the support of my coaches and my host family in Martinsville, who were real good friends with (Atlanta scouting director) Roy Clark. I believe that helped me get some exposure and put me where I am today.

I was disappointed when I wasn't drafted last year. It was pretty rough for the first month after the draft. Fortunately, I had the support of my friends and family who really encouraged me to keep my head up. I'm grateful that the Braves were willing to give me a chance to get my foot in the door and are giving me the opportunity I have now.

Pitching at Rome earlier this year was a great experience. My host family there was great, and I enjoyed playing for our manager, Randy Ingle. I felt like I learned a lot, particularly about leadership and the way to go about your business. Playing with some guys who had been in the minors for a couple of years allowed me to gain some experience and an understanding of how everything works. By absorbing that and taking everything in is how I got to Myrtle Beach as quickly as I did.

When I found out I was being promoted to Myrtle Beach, it was an incredible feeling. Like any player I want to keep moving up as fast as I can. I went to early spring training and most of the guys I shared lockers with are here in Myrtle Beach. It's been great meeting with them again and learning from them.

I think consistency is the most important thing anyone at my level can attain. If you can become known as a guy the Braves can rely on every time he takes the mound, that speaks louder than words.

Two Hilton Family Brands In One Great Location!

EMBASSY SUITES® ATLANTA – AT CENTENNIAL OLYMPIC PARK

Our great location keeps getting better. We're across the street from two of Atlanta's famous destinations, the Georgia Aquarium and the new World of Coca-Cola®!

Every one of our spacious, two-room suites overlooks a sky-lit atrium where you can enjoy a complimentary, full cooked-to-order breakfast in the morning and beverages each evening at our Manager's Reception*.

Enjoy the many attractions this area has to offer while here for a Braves game! Ask for the Braves rate by calling 1-800-EMBASSYor book one of our exciting packages on line at www.atlantacentennialpark.embsuites.com

*Subject to state and local laws. Must be of legal drinking age.

EMBASSY SUITES HOTEL®

Atlanta–at Centennial Olympic Park
267 Marietta St, Atlanta, GA 30313
404-223-2300

HILTON GARDEN INN ATLANTA DOWNTOWN

Opening March, 2008 – A new Hilton Garden Inn in the same great location. 242 guestrooms; complimentary wi-fi throughout the hotel; 24 hour workout facility; complimentary 24 hour business center plus valet and self laundry available.

Our unique property includes Legal Sea Foods, a rooftop bar overlooking Centennial Olympic Park; and of course, our premier location across the street from the Georgia Aquarium and the new World of Coca-Cola! Enjoy these attractions while here for a Braves game by booking one of our exciting packages on line at www.atlantadowntown.stayhgi.com ! Or if it's just a great rate you're looking for ask for the Braves rate by calling 1-877-STAYHGI. Everything. Right where you need it.

Hilton Garden Inn Atlanta Downtown

275 Baker Street • Atlanta, GA 30313

©2007 Hilton Hospitality, Inc.

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

ing nine RBIs. To make room for Campbell, the Braves released **Brandon Powell**...

Manager **Rocket Wheeler** believes utilityman **Robert Marcial** epitomizes the Pelicans. Not only is he capable of playing either side of the infield and could serve as the emergency catcher, but Marcial is productive at the plate despite receiving sporadic at-bats. He was 10-for-18 during a combined five starts from May 25-June 8. He also plays fundamental team baseball...

Pitching coach **Bruce Dal Canton** left the team in late May due to health concerns. Filling in for the popular Dal Canton has been roving pitching instructor **Mike Alvarez**...

Bryan Dumesnil has filled the role of closer impressively since taking over the job from **Brett Butts**. The lefthander from Canada had seven saves and a win in his first nine outings and allowed only three earned runs in his first 28 1/3 innings.

ROME
CLASS A

OUTFIELDER JASON HEYWARD and first baseman **Freddie Freeman** were named to the Southern Division roster for the South Atlantic League All-Star Game in Greensboro, N.C. "They are way beyond their time," said Rome manager **Randy Ingle**. "Two 18-year-olds, hitting third and fourth in a full-season league and handling it extremely well. You don't see that very often."

Heyward played in the season's first 56 games, the only Rome player to do so, before being given a game off on June 3. He missed four games due to inflammation in his right knee prior to returning to the lineup on June 10. The 2007 first-round draft pick has shown the ability to dominate at times and could receive a promotion to Myrtle Beach prior to his 19th birthday on Aug. 9...

Jeff Locke lost seven of his first eight decisions, but those numbers do not reveal the progress he began making in late May. Despite suffering the setback on June 3, when he allowed three runs in 6 2/3 innings, Locke put together three straight solid showings and lowered his season ERA by more than a half-run, from 5.15 to 4.69. Locke allowed more than two earned runs in only two of his first 13 appearances, including none between May 12 and June 8. Nevertheless, Locke went 0-4 during that month-long span...

Twelve hours after Ingle put the team through bunting practice, beginning at 10 a.m. June 9, **Adam Coe** dropped a perfect suicide squeeze to score **Yohan Silva** in the bottom of the ninth inning to give Rome an 8-7 win over Charleston...

Cole Rohrbough, who emerged as a top prospect last year at Danville and Rome, won his first game of the season and ended Rome's six-game losing streak with a 5-2 victory at Charleston on June 4. Rohrbough evened his record after spending the first two months in extended spring training due to rotator cuff tendinitis...

Michael Broadway was promoted to Myrtle Beach on June 4. His roster spot was taken by **Michael Mehlich**, who was promoted from extended spring training... **Cody Johnson** had 96 strikeouts in his first 227 at-bats through June 12. The South Atlantic League record for strikeouts in a season is 208...

Edgar Osuna moved from the bullpen to the rotation on June 10 and worked four solid innings in his first start. Osuna replaces **Eric Barrett**, who has shifted to a relief role in hopes of improving his command. Barrett opened the season with a 1.71 ERA in his first six starts, but went 0-4 with a 13.26 ERA in his next six. During the latter stretch, Barrett walked 27 batters in 19 innings.

FARM STATISTICS

RICHMOND 37-34

INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE TRIPLE A | THE DIAMOND (804) 359-4444

BATTER	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Anderson, Josh (OF)	.285	55	221	29	63	6	2	1	20	13	28	15
Arnold, Derrick (2B)	.333	17	42	4	14	4	0	0	1	1	10	3
Borchard, Joe (OF)	.274	33	117	16	32	5	2	4	12	13	29	3
Canizares, Barbaro (1B)	.315	66	241	27	76	14	0	8	36	19	38	0
Cruz, Enrique (3B/2B)	.295	14	44	3	13	4	0	1	3	1	11	0
Fasano, Sal (C)	.188	25	80	6	15	3	1	2	9	5	20	0
Hernandez, Diory (INF)	.305	50	187	22	57	11	0	4	25	12	27	0
Holt, J.C. (2B)	.215	26	79	11	17	1	0	0	7	14	21	7
Jones, Brandon (OF)	.263	54	190	25	50	16	0	2	25	22	49	4
Jurich, Mark (OF)	.258	18	62	7	16	5	0	0	6	5	10	0
Lillibridge, Brent (SS)	.186	50	194	21	36	6	1	1	14	16	53	13
Perry, Jason (OF)	.323	17	62	12	20	3	0	3	8	6	15	2
Sammons, Clint (C)	.253	52	178	14	45	12	0	1	14	16	34	4
Taylor, Reggie (OF)	.248	53	153	17	38	5	3	2	11	11	28	5
Thorman, Scott (1B/3B)	.250	64	240	26	60	14	0	9	34	12	54	2
Timmons, Wes (INF)	.244	62	193	30	47	15	0	0	20	35	20	9

PITCHER	W-L	ERA	G	GS	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	OBA
Basner, Ryan	1-1	4.61	13	1	0	27.1	24	14	14	8	19	.235
Bueno, Francisley	2-3	5.04	11	9	0	55.1	65	33	31	18	36	.291
DeSalvo, Matt	2-6	4.30	19	3	0	46.0	46	27	22	26	44	.267
Gamble, Jerome	0-0	6.00	1	1	0	6.0	6	4	4	2	5	.250
James, Chuck	2-2	1.18	7	6	0	38.0	30	8	5	11	28	.219
Julio, Jorge	0-0	4.50	2	0	0	2.0	2	1	1	2	1	.333
Lawrence, Brian	0-0	4.26	1	1	0	6.1	6	3	3	3	2	.261
Morton, Charlie	5-2	2.05	13	12	0	79.0	51	20	18	27	72	.181
Moss, Damian	3-6	4.25	17	11	0	55.0	64	32	26	30	44	.299
Nelson, Brad	1-3	11.49	7	4	0	15.2	32	23	20	6	10	.421
Nunez, Vladimir	3-0	3.43	26	0	3	39.1	43	15	15	19	36	.285
Resop, Chris	2-0	2.70	5	0	0	6.2	6	3	2	8	11	.240
Rouwenhorst, Jonathon	6-5	5.35	18	12	0	69.0	88	43	41	23	41	.331
Schreiber, Zach	2-2	3.27	31	0	6	33.0	26	12	12	20	26	.218
Shibilo, Andy	1-1	5.40	21	0	1	26.2	29	17	16	15	28	.271
Williamson, Scott	2-1	6.61	15	1	0	16.1	18	12	12	5	20	.277

MISSISSIPPI 30-40

SOUTHERN LEAGUE AA | TRUSTMARK PARK (601) 664-7600

BATTER	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Bennett, Paul (INF)	.174	33	86	8	15	2	1	0	8	8	24	0
Boscan, J.C. (C)	.187	42	134	14	25	6	0	0	12	18	31	0
Camarena, Jose (C)	.170	30	106	7	18	3	0	1	10	6	23	1
Creek, Greg (1B/3B)	.280	64	207	32	58	16	4	3	28	22	43	0
Davis, Quentin (OF)	.197	48	132	10	26	5	0	4	15	3	31	6
Gorecki, Reid (OF)	.385	13	52	11	20	4	0	3	12	4	11	3
Guzman, Javier (SS)	.213	60	216	21	46	11	3	0	13	10	25	2
Hernandez, Diory (INF)	.286	22	77	8	22	3	1	2	8	6	8	1
Holt, J.C. (2B)	.269	33	134	17	36	4	4	1	12	15	29	8
Jurich, Mark (OF)	.219	46	137	14	30	8	1	3	18	15	39	0
Kaaihue, Kala (1B)	.231	64	199	30	46	13	1	6	31	35	72	0
Loadenthal, Carl (OF)	.227	26	97	8	22	3	0	1	2	6	20	4
Perry, Jason (OF)	.314	38	137	34	43	11	2	13	41	23	44	1
Pope, Van (3B)	.270	35	126	18	34	8	0	2	20	10	17	2
Schafer, Jordan (OF)	.207	16	58	8	12	2	1	3	10	10	17	3
Young, Matt (OF)	.303	68	238	41	72	7	5	1	26	37	31	15

PITCHER	W-L	ERA	G	GS	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	OBA
Basner, Ryan	2-0	4.91	11	0	0	18.1	19	14	10	8	13	.268
Cuevas, Jairo	0-2	7.50	3	3	0	12.0	21	10	10	6	8	.382
Evans, Dustin	1-5	10.91	8	7	0	31.1	55	39	38	18	21	.390
Gamble, Jerome	1-5	4.83	18	5	0	50.1	46	28	27	19	30	.245
Gunderson, Kevin	1-0	0.52	12	0	1	17.1	10	1	1	5	6	.175
Hanson, Thomas	2-3	4.50	7	7	0	36.0	33	21	18	13	34	.244
Jung, Sung Ki	2-2	5.90	26	0	4	29.0	33	22	19	13	30	.280
Medlen, Kris	1-4	4.54	22	3	1	41.2	46	21	21	12	39	.291
Nelson, Brad	1-0	4.50	11	1	0	26.0	32	19	13	6	16	.302
Nix, Michael	3-2	5.29	23	0	1	34.0	34	26	20	27	27	.260
Parr, James	4-4	4.63	14	13	0	70.0	78	37	36	25	63	.287
Payano, Nelson	2-2	4.26	24	0	0	38.0	37	21	18	17	33	.257
Redmond, Todd	7-2	3.42	14	14	0	84.1	88	37	32	13	70	.267
Sencion, Carlos	2-1	2.77	8	4	0	26.0	19	8	8	8	22	.200
Smith, Dan	1-7	6.16	14	12	0	61.1	81	45	42	34	47	.328
Valdez, Luis	0-1	2.08	26	0	10	30.1	23	16	7	17	39	.204

MYRTLE BEACH 45-25

CAROLINA LEAGUE ADVANCED A | COASTAL FEDERAL FIELD (843) 918-6002

BATTER	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Arnold, Derrick (SS/3B)	.290	9	31	2	9	2	1	0	1	4	8	2
Bennett, Paul (INF)	.189	12	37	2	7	1	0	0	3	2	13	1
Britton, Phillip (C)	.237	47	173	20	41	8	0	2	13	3	27	3
Cabrera, Willie (OF)	.288	65	260	45	75	18	2	7	40	15	24	4
Campbell, Eric (3B)	.188	21	80	10	15	4	0	3	16	6	9	1
Flowers, Tyler (C)	.262	64	221	31	58	12	0	6	35	50	54	5
Hernandez, Gorkys (OF)	.306	34	147	23	45	9	5	3	18	12	26	6
Hicks, Brandon (SS)	.252	56	210	42	53	19	1	13	38	28	79	9
Jones, Travis (2B)	.256	64	238	42	61	14	2	10	44	35	60	10
Lundahl, Chad (INF)	.255	15	47	5	12	1	0	1	8	1	7	1
Marcial, Robert (INF)	.371	26	70	11	26	6	0	0	8	7	13	2
Mejia, Ernesto (1B)	.284	67	271	49	77	25	4	11	46	10	65	2
Owings, Jon (OF)	.265	60	204	27	54	13	1	8	32	12	47	7
Powell, Brandon (3B)	.225	33	120	16	27	6	0	3	11	10	31	4
Rodriguez, Concepcion (OF)	.291	42	141	19	41	8	2	2	18	10	19	3
Silva, Yohan (OF)	.211	31	95	20	20	6	1	1	6	11	22	2

PITCHER	W-L	ERA	G	GS	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	OBA
Broadway, Michael	0-1	1.29	4	0	1	7.0	2	1	1	3	4	.080
Butts, Brett	3-3	3.58	20	0	8	37.2	29	18	15	13	37	.210
Cofield, Kyle	4-5	3.27	14	14	0	66.0	69	34	24	48	42	.278
Diamond, Scott	4-1	2.25	5	5	0	32.0	31	9	8	8	26	.252
Dumesnil, Bryan	3-0	1.23	23	0	7	29.1	19	10	4	16	39	.181
Fellman, Nicholas	2-3	5.72	21	0	1	28.1	32	20	18	9	26	.291
Gunderson, Kevin	1-0	1.04	15	0	10	17.1	13	3	2	6	20	.197
Hanson, Thomas	3-1	0.90	7	7	0	40.0	15	6	4	11	49	.116
Heath, Deunte	9-2	3.11	14	14	0	84.0	78	40	29	41	53	.247
Lopez, Gonzalo	2-2	6.00	11	9	0	42.0	46	30	28	17	41	.280
Lyman, Jeffrey	1-2	3.48	19	0	0	41.1	29	19	16	23	37	.196
Reynoso, Ryne	6-4	3.09	13	13	0	67.0	59	31	23	18	60	.235
Rivas, Carlos	1-0	3.86	8	0	0	16.1	17	13	7	12	13	.262
Sencion, Carlos	0-0	1.50	3	0	0	12.0	5	2	2	4	15	.132
Tejeda, Ferdin	2-0	2.23	19	0	2	32.1	23	10	8	7	21	.200
Vines, Chris	2-0	3.72	13	7	2	48.1	46	25	20	16	45	.243

ROME 22-47

SOUTH ATLANTIC LEAGUE CLASS A | STATE MUTUAL STADIUM (706) 368-9388

BATTER	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Berres, David (OF)	.224	26	67	6	15	2	0	0	5	11	18	2
Coe, Adam (3B/2B)	.205	51	190	17	39	12	0	4	18	6	45	0
Dominguez, Javier (C)	.189	30	106	8	20	3	0	0	6	10	24	5
Fisher, Michael (SS/2B)	.282	64	241	29	68	9	1	3	20	15	49	7
Freeman, Frederick (1B)	.285	67	256	27	73	21	3	8	44	20	39	2
Gilmore, Jon (3B)	.173	22	81	3	14	0	0	0	3	2	17	1
Gress, Randy (INF)	.100	19	50	2	5	2	0	0	3	2	16	1
Heyward, Jason (OF)	.328	64	244	45	80	15	2	7	30	25	46	10
Johnson, Benji (C)	.242	35	128	16	31	3	0	3	8	7	21	2
Johnson, Cody (OF)	.210	66	238	24	50	14	0	9	29	22	98	5
Lee, Carlos (OF)	.247	42	158	15	39	8	3	1	16	8	34	8
Lundahl, Chad (INF)	.269	21	67	6	18	3	1	1	8	2	10	0
Miles, Cole (2B)	.263	61	243	30	64	5	1	1	9	15	41	16
Rodriguez, Concepcion (OF)	.267	19	60	8	16	2	0	3	13	12	16	1
Silva, Yohan (OF)	.204	19	54	11	11	4	0	2	4	16	13	2
Sime, Samuel (3B)	.181	30	105	9	19	3	0	2	8	3	23	7

PITCHER	W-L	ERA	G	GS	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	OBA
Barrett, Eric	1-7	5.76	14	12	0	54.2	56	40	35	41	58	.258
Broadway, Michael	0-3	4.96	15	0	0	32.2	43	28	18	6	21	.309
Castro, Yeliar	0-4	6.92	20	0	1	26.0	33	29	20	16	27	.306
Chapman, Jaye	0-0	4.22	5	0	0	10.2	9	5	5	7	6	.225
Diamond, Scott	3-1	3.08	9	9	0	52.2	47	20	18	11	38	.240
Evarts, Steve	2-0	1.50	3	3	0	18.0	15	5	3	1	14	.234
Gearrin, Cory	3-1	2.87	14	0	0	15.2	12	9	5	13	24	.200
Locke, Jeffrey	1-7	4.24	14	13	0	76.1	83	44	36	24	66	.271
Mehlich, Michael	0-0	1.29	3	0	0	7.0	5	1	1	1	3	.200
Ortegano, Jose	2-3	3.74	13	13	0	74.2	75	36	31	20	74	.266
Osuna, Edgar	3-2	3.18	17	2	5	45.1	42	17	16	11	55	.244
Palica, Thomas	3-2	5.72	15	0	0	28.1	25	19	18	16	29	.238
Pruneda, Benino	2-3	3.81	21	0	3	28.1	28	13	12	15	40	.259
Rivas, Carlos	0-0	1.02	9	0	1	17.2	14	3	2	9	18	.219
Rodgers, Chad	1-9	4.78	14	11	0	69.2	78	45	37	22	58	.282
Rohrbough, Cole	1-2	6.75	6	5	0	24.0	27	21	18	14	31	.273

ESPN Cable Sports Network | FSN FSN South | SS SportSouth

FOX Fox Broadcasting System | PTV Peachtree TV | TBS

All games on WGST-AM (640), The Bull (94.9 FM), and Braves Network affiliates.

JUNE/JULY

TURNER FIELD | AWAY | ALL-STAR GAME

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
29 1:07 PM TOR SS	30	1 7:00 PM PHI PTV	2 7:00 PM PHI FSN	3 7:00 PM PHI PTV	4 7:30 PM HOU PTV	5 7:00 PM HOU PTV
6 1:30 PM HOU SS	7 10:10 PM LAD SS	8 10:10 PM LAD SS	9 10:10 PM LAD FSN	10	11 10:05 PM SD SS	12 10:05 PM SD SS
13 4:05 PM SD SS	14	15 8:00 PM ALL-STAR GAME	16	17	18 7:30 PM WSH PTV	19 7:00 PM WSH PTV
20 1:30 PM WSH SS	21 7:10 PM FLA SS	22 7:10 PM FLA SS	23 7:10 PM FLA FSN	24	25 7:05 PM PHI PTV	26 3:55 PM PHI FOX
27 1:35 PM PHI SS	28 7:00 PM STL SS	29 7:00 PM STL PTV	30 7:00 PM STL FSN	31 7:00 PM STL PTV		

AUGUST

TURNER FIELD | AWAY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1 7:30 PM MIL PTV	2 3:55 PM MIL FOX
3 1:30 PM MIL SS	4 10:15 PM SF SS	5 10:15 PM SF SS	6 3:45 PM SF FSN	7 9:40 PM AZ SS	8 9:40 PM AZ SS	9 3:55 PM AZ FOX
10 4:10 PM AZ SS	11	12 7:00 PM CHC PTV	13 7:00 PM CHC FSN	14 7:00 PM CHC FSN	15 7:30 PM SF PTV	16 7:00 PM SF PTV
17 1:30 PM SF SS	18 4:30 PM SF SS	19 7:10 PM NYM PTV	20 7:10 PM NYM FSN	21 7:10 PM NYM PTV	22 8:15 PM STL SS	23 3:55 PM STL FOX
24 2:15 PM STL SS	25	26 7:00 PM FLA SS	27 7:00 PM FLA FSN	28 7:00 PM FLA SS	29 7:35 PM WSH SS	30 7:10 PM WSH SS
31 1:35 PM WSH SS						

ROSTER

As of June 18

PITCHERS (12)
46 MANNY ACOSTA
30 JEFF BENNETT
56 BLAINE BOYER
57 JORGE CAMPILLO
38 BUDDY CARLYLE
*47 TOM GLAVINE
*51 MIKE GONZALEZ
*32 MIKE HAMPTON
15 TIM HUDSON
49 JAIR JURRJENS
50 CHARLIE MORTON
*58 PETER MOYLAN
13 WILL OHMAN
37 JO-JO REYES
40 JEFF RIDGWAY
34 ROYCE RING
*29 JOHN SMOLTZ
54 PHIL STOCKMAN
*39 RAFAEL SORIANO

CATCHERS (2)
16 BRIAN MCCANN
27 CORKY MILLER

INFIELDERS (7)
19 YUNEL ESCOBAR
8 RUBEN GOTAY
4 OMAR INFANTE
2 KELLY JOHNSON
10 CHIPPER JONES
20 GREG NORTON
*14 MARTIN PRADO
24 MARK TEIXEIRA

OUTFIELDERS (4)
18 GREGOR BLANCO
*23 MATT DIAZ
7 JEFF FRANCOEUR
*11 MARK KOTSAY
28 BRANDON JONES

* DISABLED LIST

TENTATIVE; SUBJECT TO CHANGE.
FOR SEASON, GROUP AND SUITE TICKET INFORMATION CALL (404) 577-9100 OR VISIT braves.com

SEPTEMBER

TURNER FIELD | AWAY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 1:10 PM FLA SS	2 7:10 PM FLA SS	3 1:10 PM FLA FSN	4 7:00 PM WSH FSN	5 7:30 PM WSH PTV	6 7:00 PM WSH SS
7 1:30 PM WSH SS	8	9 7:00 PM	10 7:00 PM	11 7:00 PM	12 7:10 PM	13 3:55 PM
14 1:10 PM NYM SS	15					
21 1:30 PM NYM SS	22					
28 2:05 PM HOU SS	29					

OCTO

SUNDAY						
5 NLDS 2008	6					
12 NLCS 2008	13					
19	20					
26 WORLD SERIES 2008	27					

FREE Bonus!

10% Off coupon for your next purchase from the ... Braves COLLECTION

- Caps • T-Shirts • Jerseys •
- Sportswear •
- Novelties •
- Souvenirs •
- Collectibles •

Subscribe to *ChopTalk* magazine today!

○ One year, 12 issues ... only $37.95!
○ Two years, 24 issues ... only $67.95!

○ New Order ○ Renewal ... Acct. # _____
○ Visa ○ MasterCard ○ American Express ○ Discover
○ Payment Enclosed ○ Bill Me Later*

Card # _____
Exp. Date _____ Signature _____

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Email _____

MAIL To: *ChopTalk*, P.O. Box 80750, Conyers, GA 30013 ...or...
FAX To: (281) 261-5999 ...or... CALL: 1-877-655-2467 (CHOP)
Visit us online at... www.choptalkonline.com

B08003

* Coupon will be sent after payment is received. This offer valid only to ChopTalk subscribers. Non-transferable. Valid only on regularly priced merchandise and cannot be combined with any other Braves Clubhouse Collection discount offer. Coupon redeemable only once.

YOU'RE ... FFICIAL!

JOIN THE Braves 400 CLUB FOR ONLY $25

THE OFFICIAL FAN CLUB OF THE ATLANTA BRAVES

YOU'LL RECEIVE: * MEMBERSHIP CARD, * 400 CLUB DECAL, * BRAVES BUMPER STICKER, * NEWSLETTER, * PARTICIPATE IN SPECIAL EVENTS.

JOIN ON-LINE AT BRAVES400.ORG
OR SEND A CHECK FOR $25 TO:
BRAVES 400 CLUB, P.O. BOX 7689, ATLANTA, GA 30309
More Information at Braves400.org or (770) 416-4539.

TICKETING

TO PURCHASE SEASON TICKETS OR FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL (404) 577-9100 OR VISIT **braves.com/tickets**

INDIVIDUAL PRICES

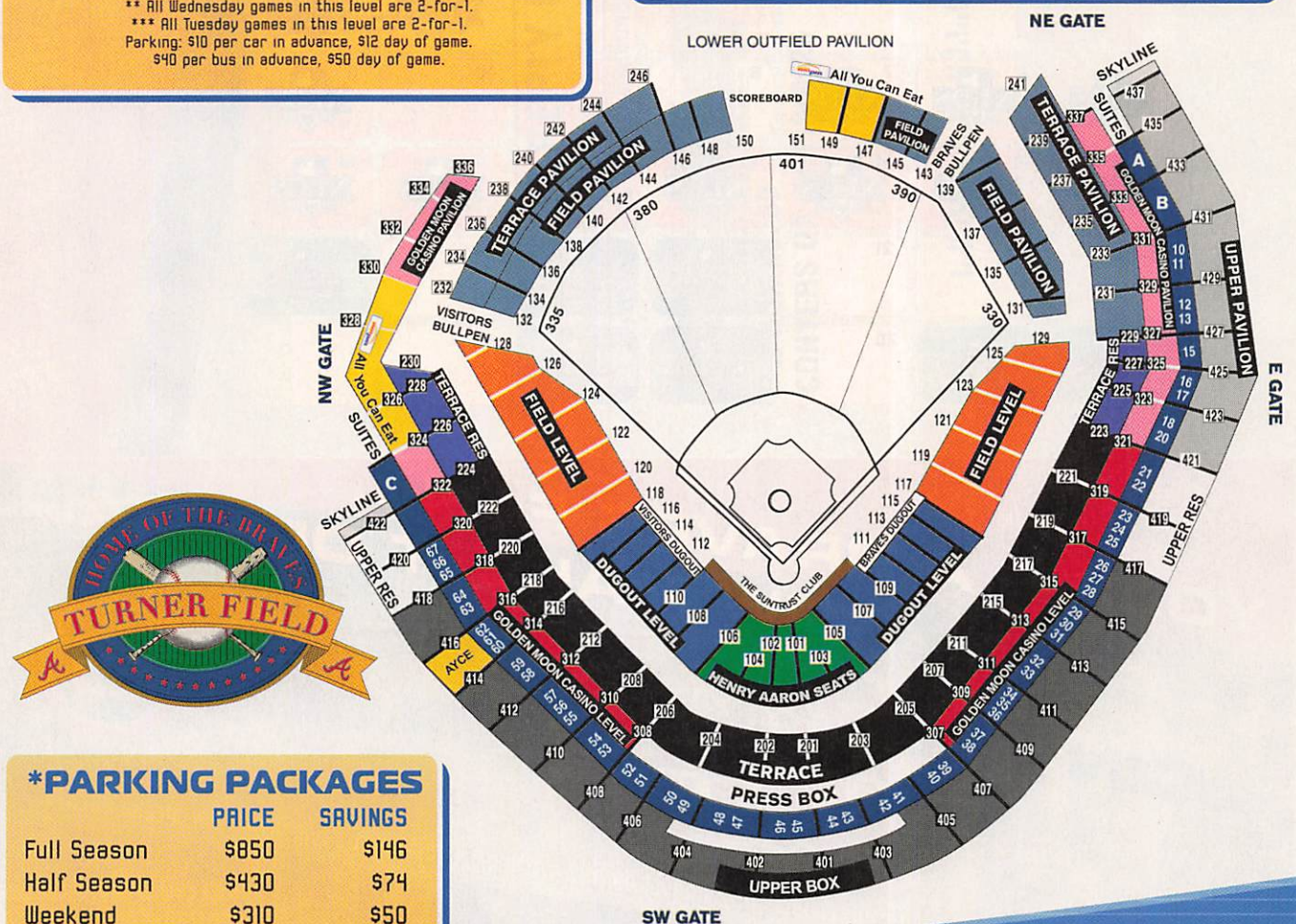
SECTION	REGULAR	PREMIUM*
Henry Aaron	$70	$74
Dugout	$60	$64
Golden Moon Casino Level	$38	$42
Field	$36	$40
Terrace	$36	$40
Club Pavilion	$28	$32
Terrace Reserved	$24	$28
Outfield Pavilion**	$22	$26
Upper Box	$12	$16
Upper Reserved***	$8	$12
Upper Pavilion	$6	$6

* All Friday, Saturday games and Opening Day.
** All Wednesday games in this level are 2-for-1.
*** All Tuesday games in this level are 2-for-1.
Parking: $10 per car in advance, $12 day of game.
$40 per bus in advance, $50 day of game.

*FULL SEASON

SECTION	PRICE	SAVINGS
Dugout	$4,316	$772
Terrace	$2,490	$606
Field	$2,490	$606
Club	$2,822	$440
Outfield Pavilion	$996	$938
Upper Box	$830	$274
Upper Pavilion	$249	$249
Terrace Reserved*	$1,826	$274
Club Pavilion*	$2,158	$274
All You Can Eat Outfield	$2,905	$965
All You Can Eat Club Pavilion	$3,984	$1,546

*Inquire about pro-rated prices



*PARKING PACKAGES

	PRICE	SAVINGS
Full Season	$850	$146
Half Season	$430	$74
Weekend	$310	$50
20-Game	$200	$40

*Inquire about pro-rated prices

MUSEUM & TOUR INFO

The Ivan Allen Jr. Braves Museum features more than 500 Braves artifacts that trace the team's history from its beginnings in Boston (1871-1952) to Milwaukee (1953-65) to Atlanta (1966-present). It is located on the northwest side of Turner Field at aisle 134. The museum opens two and a half hours before each game and closes in the middle of the seventh inning. The museum is open year-round and is the starting point of one-hour guided tours of Turner Field. Tours leave on the hour.

Tour reservations are not necessary for individuals or groups of less than 20 people. Tickets can be purchased the day of the tour at the main ticket window. Free parking in the Green lot.

Admission to the museum during games is one token ($2) and $5 on non-game days. Tour tickets are $12 for adults, $7 for children and $10 for groups of 20 or more. Walk-up tickets can be purchased at the ticket window. Groups of 20 or more and school groups must make reservations two weeks in advance by calling (404) 614-2311.

HOURS OF OPERATION

APRIL - OCTOBER	
Monday - Saturday	9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Sunday	1 - 3 p.m.
OCTOBER - MARCH	
Monday - Saturday	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
DEC. 23-JAN. 3	CLOSED

TOUR TICKETS

ADULTS	$12
CHILDREN 13 and Under	$7
MILITARY	$7
GROUP	$10

SCHOOL GROUP PRICES

CHILDREN	$5
ADULTS	$7

*Subject to change
Tours not available when the Braves have afternoon home games

TICKET SPECIALS

- Coca-Cola 2-for-1 Tuesdays: Buy 1 Upper Reserved for $8, get 1 Free.
- MasterCard Grand Slam Pack: 4 Tickets, 4 hotdogs, 4 Cokes, parking and yearbook, starting at $59.
- McDonald's Outfield Advantage: Wednesdays, Buy 1 Outfield Pavilion for $22, Get 1 Free.
- College Discount: Show college ID at Turner Field ticket window to get 2 Upper Box tickets for the price of 1.
- Military Discount: Show ID at Turner Field ticket window to get 2 Upper Box tickets for the price of 1.
- Topps Thursdays: Present/surrender 1 Topps baseball card wrapper at Turner Field ticket window to receive 1 Free Outfield Pavilion ticket with the purchase of 1 ticket of equal/greater value.

* All ticket offers subject to availability. Seating restrictions may apply. Not to be combined with any other discount, promotion or coupon. No reservations or tickets by phone or outlet. Free ticket offers can only be transacted at Turner Field ticket office.

HALF SEASON

Section	Price	Savings
Field	$1,344	$276
Club	$1,512	$192
Outfield Pavilion	$714	$318
Upper Box	$462	$150

*WEEKEND PACKAGE

Section	Price	Savings
Field	$960	$180
Club	$1,080	$120
Outfield Pavilion	$510	$210
Upper Box	$330	$90

*Inquire about pro-rated prices

20-GAME PLANS

Section	Price	Savings
Club	$720	$88
Field	$640	$128
Upper Box	$220	$68

9-GAME FLEX PLAN

Pick a minimum of 9 games for package prices starting at $99.

JULY EVENTS

July 2 vs. Phillies	Tom Glavine T-shirts (Delta)
	Toy Drive
July 3 vs. Phillies	Christmas in July
	Singles Night
	Toy Drive
July 4 vs. Astros	Fourth of July Celebration/ Fireworks
	Braves Foundation Weekend
July 5 vs. Astros	Braves Foundation Weekend
July 6 vs. Astros	Alumni Meet & Greet
	Braves Foundation Weekend
July 20 vs. Nationals	Gospel Fest
July 30 vs. Cardinals	'70s 'a' Hat Giveaway (NAPA)
July 31 vs. Cardinals	Wild West Night
	Ladies Night

4-GAME PACK

	TERRACE LEVEL $140	OUTFIELD PAVILION $84		UPPER BOX $44
SUMMER GETAWAY PACK	July 19 (Washington)	July 20 (Washington)	Aug. 2 (Milwaukee)	Aug. 3 (Milwaukee)
CUBS/CARDS PACK	July 30 (St. Louis)	July 31 (St. Louis)	Aug. 13 (Cubs)	Aug. 14 (Cubs)
PLAYOFF PUSH PACKAGE	Sept. 18 (Philadelphia)	Sept. 19 (Philadelphia)	Sept. 20 (Mets)	Sept. 21 (Mets)

GAME BY GAME

GAME	DATE	OPP	H/A	W-L	SCORE	W/L PITCHER	ATL HRS	REC	POS	GB
1	3/30	WAS	A	L	2-3	Moylan (0-1)	Jones (1)	0-1	5	-1/2
2	3/31	PIT	H	L	11-12 (12)	Boyer (0-1)	McCann (1), Francoeur (1)	0-2	5	-2
3	4/2	PIT	H	W	10-2	Jurrjens (1-0)	Diaz (1), Teixeira (1), Escobar (1)	1-2	T-3	-2
4	4/3	PIT	H	L	3-4 (10)	Resop (0-1)	—	1-3	5	-2
5	4/5	NYM	H	W	11-5	Hudson (1-0)	Johnson (1)	2-3	T-4	-1
6	4/6	NYM	H	W	3-1	Smoltz (1-0)	Teixeira (2)	3-3	T-1	—
7	4/7	COL	A	L	1-2	Boyer (0-2)	—	3-4	T-2	-1
8	4/8	COL	A	L	3-4	Jurrjens (1-1)	Kotsay (1)	3-5	T-3	-1 1/2
9	4/9	COL	A	L	6-12	James (0-1)	McCann (2)	3-6	T-4	-2 1/2
10	4/11	WAS	A	W	3-0	Hudson (2-0)	Escobar (2)	4-6	4	-3
11	4/12	WAS	A	W	10-2	Smoltz (2-0)	Francoeur 2 (3), McCann (3)	5-6	4	-2
12	4/13	WAS	A	L	4-5	Glavine (0-1)	Jones (2)	5-7	4	-2
13	4/15	FLA	A	L	0-4	Jurrjens (1-2)	--	5-8	4	-3
14	4/16	FLA	A	L	5-6	Hudson (2-1)	Escobar (3)	5-9	4	-4
15	4/17	FLA	A	W	8-0	Smoltz (3-0)	Jones 2 (4), Teixeira (3), McCann (4), Johnson (2)	6-9	4	-3
16	4/18	LAD	H	W	6-1	Ohman (1-0)	Jones 2 (6)	7-9	4	-2 1/2
17	4/19	LAD	H	W	4-1	James (1-1)	--	8-9	3	-2 1/2
18	4/20	LAD	H	W	6-1	Jurrjens (2-2)	Johnson (3), Teixeira (4)	9-9	3	-2
19	4/21	WAS	H	W	7-3	Hudson (3-1)	McCann (5)	10-9	3	-2
20	4/22	WAS	H	L	0-6	Smoltz (3-1)	--	10-10	4	-2
21	4/23	FLA	H	L	2-7	Bennett (0-1)	Diaz (2)	10-11	4	-3
22	4/24	FLA	H	W	7-4	James (2-1)	Jones (7)	11-11	4	-2
23	4/25	NYM	A	W	6-3	Jurrjens (3-2)	Johnson (4)	12-11	3	-2
24	4/26	NYM	A	L	3-4	Hudson (3-2)	--	12-12	4	-2
25	4/27	NYM	A	L	3-6	Smoltz (3-2)	--	12-13	4	-3
26	4/29	WAS	A	L	3-6	Boyer (0-3)	Jones (8)	12-14	4	-3
27	4/30	WAS	A	L	2-3 (12)	Acosta (0-1)	--	12-15	4	-3
28	5/2	CIN	H	W	2-0	Hudson (4-2)	McCann (6)	13-15	4	-3
29	5/3	CIN	H	W	9-1	Reyes (1-0)	--	14-15	4	-2
30	5/4	CIN	H	W	14-7	Ring (1-0)	Jones (9), Kotsay (2)	15-15	4	-2
31	5/6	SD	H	W	5-3	Jurrjens (4-2)	Jones (10), Kotsay (3)	16-15	T-3	-1 1/2
32	5/7	SD	H	W	5-2	Hudson (5-2)	--	17-15	T-3	-1 1/2
33	5/8	SD	H	W	5-4	Acosta (1-1)	--	18-15	3	-1 1/2
34	5/9	PIT	A	L	2-3	Bennett (0-2)	--	18-16	4	-2 1/2
35	5/10	PIT	A	L	2-5	James (2-2)	Teixeira (5)	18-17	4	-3 1/2
36	5/12 (1 of 2)	PIT	A	L	0-5	Jurrjens (4-3)	--	18-18	4	-4 1/2
37	5/12 (2 of 2)	PIT	A	W	8-1	Hudson (6-2)	McCann (7)	19-18	4	-3 1/2
38	5/13	PHI	A	L	4-5	Reyes (1-1)	--	19-19	4	-3 1/2
39	5/14	PHI	A	W	8-6	Glavine (1-1)	Escobar (4), Jones (11), Johnson (5)	20-19	4	-2 1/2
40	5/15	PHI	A	L	0-5	James (2-3)	--	20-20	4	-3
41	5/16	OAK	H	W	3-2	Acosta (2-1)	--	21-20	4	-2
42	5/17	OAK	H	L	4-5	Hudson (6-3)	--	21-21	4	-3
43	5/18	OAK	H	W	5-2	Reyes (2-1)	--	22-21	4	-2
44	5/20 (1 of 2)	NYM	H	W	6-1	Glavine (2-1)	McCann (8)	23-21	3	-1 1/2
45	5/20 (2 of 2)	NYM	H	W	6-2	Campillo (1-0)	Kotsay (4)	24-21	2	-1 1/2
46	5/21	NYM	H	W	11-4	Jurrjens (5-3)	Jones (12), Francoeur (4)	25-21	2	-1 1/2
47	5/22	NYM	H	W	4-2	Hudson (7-3)	--	26-21	2	-1 1/2
48	5/23	ARZ	H	L	1-11	Reyes (2-2)	--	26-22	2	-1 1/2
49	5/24	ARZ	H	W	3-1	Boyer (1-3)	Francoeur (5)	27-22	2	-1
50	5/25	ARZ	H	L	3-9	Glavine (2-2)	--	27-23	2	-2 1/2
51	5/26	ARZ	H	W	7-3	Acosta (3-1)	McCann (9)	28-23	2	-2 1/2
52	5/27	MIL	A	L	2-3	Bennett (0-3)	Johnson (6), Blanco (1)	28-24	3	-2 1/2
53	5/28	MIL	A	L	0-1	Reyes (2-3)	--	28-25	3	-2 1/2
54	5/29	MIL	A	W	8-1	Campillo (2-0)	Teixeira (6)	29-25	3	-2
55	5/30	CIN	A	L	2-3 (11)	Ring (1-1)	--	29-26	3	-2 1/2
56	5/31	CIN	A	L	7-8 (10)	Acosta (3-2)	Norton (1), Teixeira (7), Francoeur (6)	29-27	3	-3
57	6/1	CIN	A	L	2-6	Hudson (7-4)	Teixeira (8), McCann (10)	29-28	4	-3 1/2
58	6/2	FLA	H	W	7-5 (10)	Ohman (2-0)	Francoeur (7), Teixeira (9), Escobar (5)	30-28	3	-3 1/2
59	6/3	FLA	H	W	5-4	Ohman (3-0)	Jones (13)	31-28	3	-3 1/2
60	6/4	FLA	H	L	4-6	Acosta (3-3)	--	31-29	T-3	-3 1/2
61	6/5	FLA	H	W	7-5	Jurrjens (6-3)	Escobar (6), McCann (11), Jones (14)	32-29	3	-3 1/2
62	6/6	PHI	H	L	3-4 (10)	Acosta (3-4)	McCann (12)	32-30	3	-4 1/2
63	6/7	PHI	H	L	2-6	Reyes (2-4)	Jones (15)	32-31	3	-5 1/2
64	6/8	PHI	H	L	3-6	Boyer (1-4)	Teixeira (10)	32-32	3	-6 1/2
65	6/10	CHC	A	L	5-10	Glavine (2-3)	Norton (2)	32-33	3	-6 1/2
66	6/11	CHC	A	L	2-7	Bennett (0-4)	Miller (1)	32-34	3	-6 1/2
67	6/12	CHC	A	L	2-3 (11)	Acosta (3-5)	Francoeur (8)	32-35	3	-7 1/2
68	6/13	LAA	A	W	5-2	Reyes (3-4)	--	33-35	3	-7 1/2
69	6/14	LAA	A	W	9-4	Morton (1-0)	B. Jones (1), Johnson (7)	34-35	3	-6 1/2
70	6/15	LAA	A	L	0-2	Campillo (2-1)	--	34-36	3	-6 1/2
71	6/16	COL	A	W	7-1	Jurrjens (7-3)	--	35-36	3	-6 1/2

Braves INDIVIDUAL STATS

AS OF 6/16/08

BATTERS	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	TB	BB	SO	SB	CS	OBP	SLG	E
JONES, B.	.471	5	17	4	8	1	0	1	4	12	1	5	0	0	.526	.706	0
JONES, C.	.403	64	238	45	96	12	0	15	44	153	43	28	2	0	.493	.643	8
RIGHT	.419		86		36	3	0	1	8	42	13	7			.490	.488	
LEFT	.395		152		60	9	0	14	36	111	30	21			.495	.730	
McCANN	.306	65	32	72	131	21	1	12	39	131	26	30	0	0	.381	.557	2
ESCOBAR	.303	68	271	42	82	8	1	6	30	110	34	39	2	4	.379	.406	6
KOTSAY	.294	47	170	23	50	8	2	4	21	74	13	16	2	1	.344	.435	0
PRADO	.282	18	39	10	11	3	2	0	6	18	7	3	1	0	.383	.462	3
JOHNSON	.280	63	236	39	66	18	2	7	27	109	28	48	6	2	.354	.462	7
TEIXEIRA	.271	69	266	36	72	15	0	10	49	117	35	47	0	0	.361	.440	2
RIGHT	.219		96		21	3	0	3	14	33	13	15			.318	.344	
LEFT	.300		170		51	12	0	7	35	84	22	32			.385	.494	
BLANCO	.267	58	165	16	44	5	1	1	11	54	28	39	5	0	.376	.327	0
FRANCOEUR	.255	70	282	37	72	19	2	8	40	119	17	46	0	1	.305	.422	0
INFANTE	.253	28	75	8	19	4	3	0	6	29	10	10	0	0	.341	.387	2
DIAZ	.250	42	132	9	33	2	0	2	14	41	3	32	4	2	.270	.311	1
GOTAY	.200	44	40	3	8	1	0	0	1	9	8	14	1	0	.333	.225	0
RIGHT	.100		10		1	0	0	0	0	1	3	4			.308	.100	
LEFT	233		30		7	1	0	0	1	8	5	10			.343	.267	
NORTON	.181	34	72	8	13	2	0	2	11	21	11	15	0	0	.289	.292	1
RIGHT	.200		20		4	0	0	1	5	7	3	3			.304	.350	
LEFT	.173		52		9	2	0	1	6	14	8	12			.283	.269	
AL	.438	6	16	2	7	2	0	0	4	9	2	4	0	0	.500	.563	1
MILLER	.111	18	36	3	4	0	0	1	3	7	4	10	0	0	.200	.194	0
ATLANTA	.274	71	2,449	328	672	121	16	69	315	1,032	281	429	25	10	.351	.421	41
OPPONENTS	.246	71	2,351	283	578	128	16	62	267	924	249	492	17	57	.322	.393	48

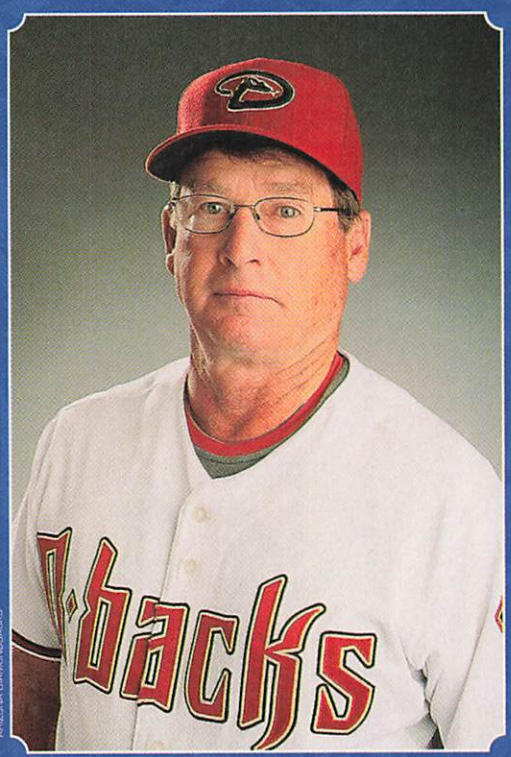
PINCH-HITTERS (AVG-H-HR-RBI) **Kotsay** (.500-1-0-0), **Infante** (.400-2-0-2), **Diaz** (.375-3-0-0), **Johnson** (.333-1-1-4), **McCann** (.333-1-0-0), **Miller** (.333-1-1-2), **Blanco** (.250-1-0-0), **Gotay** (.212-7-0-1), **Norton** (.182-2-0-3), **B. Jones** (.000-0-0-0), **Prado** (.000-0-0-0). **TEAM** (.247-23-2-12).

PITCHERS (AVG-H-HR-RBI) **Campillo** (.182, 2-0-2), **Bennett** (.143-1-0-0), **Jurrjens** (.107-30-0), **Glavine** (.105-2-0-1), **Hudson** (.103-3-0-2), **Acosta** (.000-0-0-0), **Boyer** (.000-0-0-0), **Carlyle** (.000-1-0-0), **Reyes** (.000-0-0-0), **Smoltz** (.000-0-0-1). **STAFF** (.089-11-0-6).

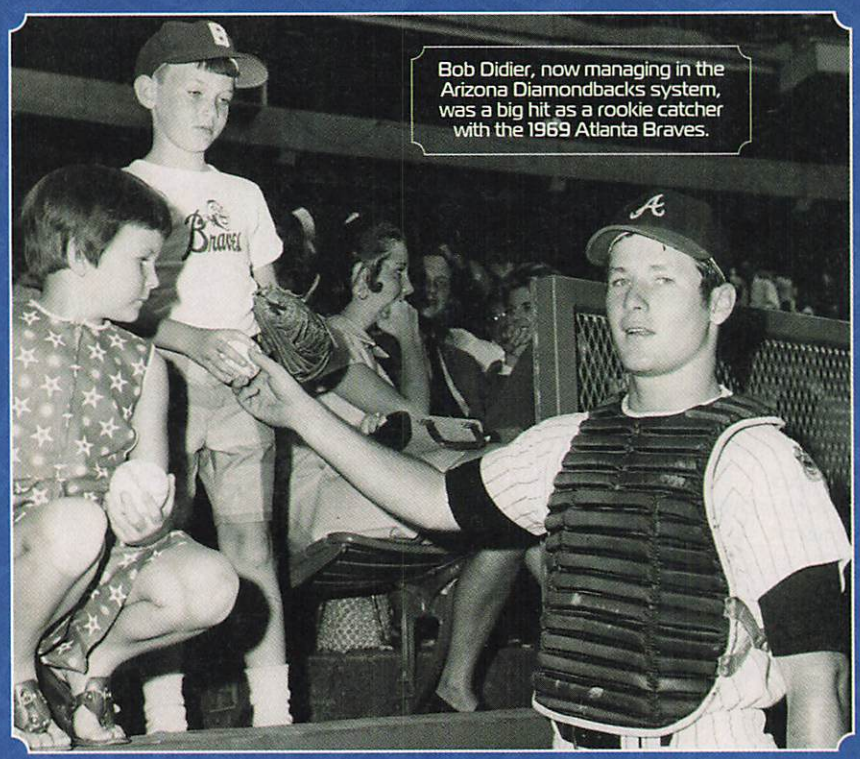
BATTING KEY: Batting average, SLG-Slugging percentage, OBP-On-base percentage, G-Games, AB-At-bats, R-Runs, H-Hits, 2B-Doubles, 3B-Triples, HR-Home runs, RBI-Runs batted in, TB-Total bases, BB-Walks, SO-Strikeouts, SB-Stolen bases, CS-Caught stealing, E-Errors

PITCHING KEY: W-L-Wins-Losses, ERA-Earned run average, GS-Starts, GF-Games finished, SV-Saves, IP-Innings pitched, HB-Hit batters, WP-Wild pitches, OBA-Opponents' batting average.

PITCHERS	W-L	ERA	G	GS	GF	SV	IP	H	R	ER	HR	HB	BB	SO	WP	OBA
STOCKMAN	0-0	0.00	6	0	4	0	7.1	2	0	0	0	1	4	9	1	.087
RIDGWAY	0-0	0.00	2	0	1	0	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	.143
MOYLAN	0-1	1.59	7	0	2	1	5.2	5	1	1	1	1	1	5	0	.217
SORIANO	0-0	2.00	9	0	5	3	9	4	2	2	0	0	7	11	1	.129
OHMAN	3-0	2.12	38	0	8	1	29.2	22	10	7	1	0	13	27	1	.204
CAMPILLO	2-1	2.17	20	6	3	0	54	45	17	13	4	0	9	45	1	.227
SMOLTZ	3-2	2.57	6	5	0	0	28	25	8	8	2	0	8	36	2	.229
CARLYLE	0-0	2.70	13	0	4	0	13.1	10	4	4	0	0	10	12	2	.208
HUDSON	7-4	2.76	15	15	0	0	98	88	33	30	7	1	24	59	1	.245
JURRJENS	7-3	3.43	14	14	0	0	84	86	35	32	5	2	34	62	0	.263
BOYER	1-4	3.99	37	0	8	1	38.1	34	21	17	3	1	14	34	0	.236
RING	1-1	4.05	27	0	2	0	13.1	13	7	6	2	1	2	11	0	.260
ACOSTA	3-5	4.41	34	0	18	3	34.2	35	21	17	7	1	17	22	0	.267
REYES	3-4	4.42	9	9	0	0	53	53	28	26	7	1	18	47	0	.265
MORTON	1-0	4.50	1	1	0	0	6	5	3	3	0	1	1	4	0	.217
BENNETT	0-4	4.56	33	4	5	2	53.1	49	27	27	5	5	28	42	2	.247
GLAVINE	2-3	4.85	12	12	0	0	59.1	60	33	32	9	1	33	34	0	.276
ATLANTA	35-36	3.68	71	71	69	11	630.1	578	283	258	62	22	249	492	15	.246
OPPONENTS	36-35	4.38	71	71	69	15	628.2	672	328	306	69	16	281	429	17	.274



ARIZONA DIAMONDBACKS



Bob Didier, now managing in the Arizona Diamondbacks system, was a big hit as a rookie catcher with the 1969 Atlanta Braves.

ATLANTA BRAVES

UTILITY CATCHER

Didier Helped Win '69 Division Title, Then Quickly Embarked On Diverse Path

BY BRIAN KNAPP

BOB DIDIER'S IMPACT on the national pastime extends far beyond the six years he spent playing in the major leagues. His is a story of generations bridged, lives changed, and service fulfilled.

In the three decades that have elapsed since his playing career ended, Didier has served as a minor league manager, big league coach, advanced scout or catching coordinator for 10 different organizations, from the Braves and Astros to the Cubs, Mariners and Yankees. At 59, he shows no signs of slowing down.

Didier currently manages the Yakima Bears, an Arizona Diamondbacks rookie league affiliate in Yakima, Wash., roughly 100 miles from his home in the Seattle suburbs. He has come to love teaching the game every bit as much as he loved playing it.

"These young kids are all bright-eyed and want to make it to the major leagues," said Didier, in his fourth year with the Diamondbacks organization. "Being around that is pretty special."

His own development at different stages in the process – player, coach, manager and scout – provides his players with a depth and perspective for which there is no substitute. He shows them more than the tip of the iceberg.

"Seeing the things I've seen, kids need to hear it," Didier said. "Derek Jeter, in his first full year [as a professional], made 59 errors as a shortstop. Young kids can't believe it. They see him on TV, and they can't visualize Derek Jeter as a 19-year-old kid with 59 errors."

Didier has crossed every imaginable barrier coaching and scouting has thrown his way – age, race, even language. In 2007, he spent a month in Italy as part of a Major League Baseball contingent putting together a four-week-long academy for 55 players, ages 12 to 21, from 17 countries in Europe and Africa. Didier believes baseball could soon see returns on such investments.

"The caliber of baseball in Europe is on the upswing," he said. "In the next 10-15 years, I know we're going to start seeing some of those players reach the major leagues."

The fact that Didier made such a relatively small dent as a player makes the difference he has made since he retired even more amazing.

Chosen by the Braves in the fourth round of the 1967 amateur draft, he reached the big leagues two years later at age 20 and caught a pitching staff that included 23-game winner and future Hall-of-Famer Phil Niekro. Didier played in 114 games, batted a respectable .256 and drove in 32 runs (all career bests), as he finished fourth in National League Rookie of the Year balloting,

helping the Braves win their first division title in Atlanta. The world felt as if it were at his fingertips.

"I look back and have really fond memories of that time," Didier said. "I was 20 years old and catching in the major leagues, and we won the division in 1969. I went from single-A to the major leagues and played with some of the greatest players of all-time. At the time, I didn't realize it. I was just playing baseball."

He was unable to reclaim the magic of his rookie season. Didier spun his wheels in the years that followed and was ultimately designated as Niekro's personal catcher. Lack of consistent playing time stunted his development, and he never again played in more than 57 games in a season.

"They started thinking of me as a backup catcher," Didier said. "That probably wasn't the wisest thing for me, trying to be a backup at 22, 23 (years old). I should have been in the minor leagues, but I was a knuckleball catcher. I caught Phil Niekro. It's difficult for a young player to play that kind of role."

In 1973, the Braves traded Didier to the Tigers in exchange for Gene Lamont, another journeyman catcher who never made it to the majors with the Braves. His major league playing career ended a year later with the Red Sox, when he was just 25. Didier, a switch-hitter, failed to hit a home run in 247 games at the major league level and never made more than $23,000 in a season, a far cry from the salaries paid to reserve catchers in today's market. His career batting average was .229 in 751 at-bats.

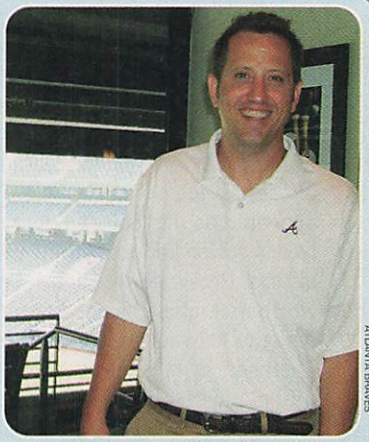
"We all live in the past a little bit, but I enjoyed what I did," Didier said. "I spent seven years with the Braves [organization]. I don't really have any regrets. I got to play in the major leagues and moved on. I met a lot of good people – friends – and it made me a better coach and scout."

The Hattiesburg, Miss., native has passed on the baton of baseball knowledge, just as his father, longtime executive and scout Mel Didier, did to him. The family's presence in the sport figures to continue. Didier's youngest son, Beau, has already signed a letter of intent to play infield for Louisiana State University, where his grandfather was a two-sport all-American.

"I've dedicated a lot of my time to him," said Didier, a father of five. "He has a chance to be drafted (taken in 40th round by Pittsburgh). I hope he has a tough decision ahead of him, about whether or not to go to college."

HOW I MADE IT TO THE MAJORS

JOHN FARRELL
SUITE SALES MANAGER


ATLANTA BRAVES

BY STEVE FALL

JOHN FARRELL considers himself very lucky.

"I always tell my wife that we have over 2.7 million people that come to where I work to enjoy themselves," said Farrell, who sells packages for Turner Field's 59 luxury suites. "I'm selling entertainment. This is your way to get away from your job."

Experiencing Braves baseball from one of the suites makes for the perfect escape. They feature outdoor seating and flat-screen televisions, as well as great food and drink. Corporations purchase the majority of the luxury suites, but some individuals and Braves players also have them. They vary from a 14-person size to party suites that hold 46.

The 36-year-old Farrell manages the suites on game nights, making sure that everyone has what they need. When the team goes on the road, he focuses on making calls, setting outside appointments, and attending business networking functions to locate prospects. He gets referrals from friends and acquaintances, who all know what he does for a living. The Braves also hold a suite night once every homestand, when they invite prospects to the stadium to enjoy the experience.

"Once they get to see the product in person, it makes a big difference versus me going out to their office," said Farrell, who was born in Greendale, Wisconsin, outside of Milwaukee.

His approach focuses on building relationships with potential clients.

"I want you to believe in me, believe in the product, and see first-hand how it's going to help you with your employees, prospects and clients."

After working in the telecom industry, Farrell broke into sports with the NHL's Atlanta Thrashers in 2001. He interviewed with Derek Schiller, now the Braves' executive vice president of sales and marketing who previously worked for the hockey team.

Farrell spent four seasons with the Thrashers as an account executive. When the NHL lockout cancelled the 2004-05 season, Farrell contacted Schiller about a position with the Braves. After interviewing successfully, he joined the club in 2005 as a senior account executive selling season ticket packages. He moved into the suite sales manager position in July 2007.

Farrell, who pitched and played the outfield in his youth, grew up a Cubs fan. His family moved frequently. They eventually came to Atlanta, where he attended St. Pius X High School. He then earned a business degree from Saint Leo University, near Tampa, Florida.

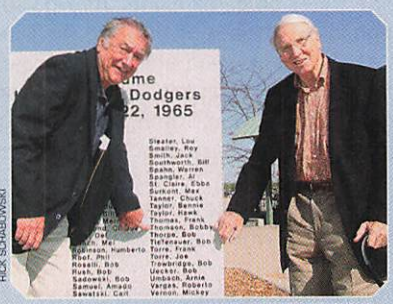
"I believe that you have to have a passion for the sport and have some knowledge of it," said Farrell, when asked how to land a similar job in baseball. "It's not even necessary to get a sports marketing degree, if you take classes that are geared toward sports."

Farrell suggests trainee programs to help jobseekers get a foot in the door. His department currently includes two trainees.

"We have a trainee program here. You really get to see what we do," he said. "We include them in everything, as far as helping with proposals, or if they want to assist us during the game. I also recommend that people look into the league and team job fairs, and get in front of as many teams as they possibly can."

ALUMNI NOTES

The Milwaukee Braves Historical Association honored one of the most celebrated ballplayers of the 1950s on May 15. **Bobby Thomson** (OF, 1954-57), best remembered as the man who hit "The Shot Heard 'Round the World" to win the 1951 National League playoff series for the New York Giants, appeared as the featured guest at the MBHA spring banquet attended by 250 at the Potawatomi Bingo Casino's Northern Lights Theater. Earlier in the day, the Milwaukee Brewers honored Thomson at Miller Park with a brief on-field ceremony. The 84-year-old Thomson told several stories at the banquet, including how he broke his ankle in spring training 1954, opening the door for a rookie named **Hank Aaron** (OF/1B, 1954-74) to win a spot in the lineup.



RICK SCHABOWSKI

Former Braves All-Star shortstop Johnny Logan (L) shows Bobby Thomson his name on the Milwaukee Braves monument located on the former site of County Stadium.

Braves Hall of Famer **Del Crandall** (C, 1949-63) will be among the inaugural class inducted into the Albuquerque Professional Baseball Hall of Fame July 23 at Isotopes Park in Albuquerque. Crandall managed five-plus seasons (1978-83) in the city and won four Pacific Coast League championships.

The Dodgers' **Andruw Jones** (OF, 1996-2007) had surgery to repair torn cartilage in his right knee May 27. He's expected to miss four to six weeks.

The Royals signed **Horacio Ramirez** (LHP, 2003-06) to a minor league contract. He was released by Seattle in March.

Bret Boone (2B, 1999) decided to retire after playing 13 games for Washington's Triple-A team. He hadn't played in the majors since 2005.

San Diego designated **Wil Ledezma** (LHP, 2007) for assignment.

Former Braves scheduled to appear at the National Sports Collectors Convention July 39-Aug. 3 at the Donald E. Stephens Center in Rosemont, Ill. include: **Bob Gibson** (coach, 1982-84), **Todd Hollandsworth** (2005, OF), **Red Schoendienst** (2B, 1957-60), **Bruce Sutter** (RHP, 1985-88) and **Jerome Walton** (OF, 1996).

The White Sox designated **DeWayne Wise** (OF, 2004) for assignment, and he accepted an outright assignment to Triple-A Charlotte.

The Cubs acquired **Jim Brower** (RHP, 2005) from Cincinnati for future considerations.

Phil Niekro (RHP, 1964-83, '87) participated in a groundbreaking ceremony for The Little House, a new home for the Edmondson-Telford Center for Children and the Hall-Dawson Court Appointed Special Advocates program in Gainesville, Ga. Niekro was the major fundraiser for the project.

Jorge Sosa (RHP, 2005-06) was designated for assignment by the Mets and then released. He signed a minor league contract with Houston.

Ray King (LHP) signed a minor league deal with Astros after being released by Washington.

Ralph Garr (OF, 1968-75), a scout with the Braves, represented the organization at the draft June 5-6 at Disney's Wide World of Sports complex. Former Braves representing other organizations included **John "Blue Moon" Odom**, Oakland (RHP, 1975), **Dennis Martinez**, St. Louis (RHP, 1998), **Felipe Alou**, Giants (OF/1B, 1964-69), **Chuck Tanner**, Pittsburgh (OF, 1955-57, Manager, 1986-88), **Ken Griffey**, Cincinnati (OF/1B, 1986-88) and **Vinny Castilla**, Colorado (3B/SS, 1991-92, 2002-03).

BIRTHDAYS

JULY

2ND	TIM SPEHR (42)
3RD	LARRY WHISENTON (52)
	DANNY HEEP (51)
	DAN MEYER (27)
4TH	CHUCK TANNER (79)
	BOBBY MALKMUS (77)
	VINNY CASTILLA (41)
5TH	GARY MATTHEWS (58)
6TH	MARTY MALLOY (36)
	GREG NORTON (36)
7TH	CHUCK GOGGIN (63)
	RICK KESTER (62)
	LEN BARKER (53)
8TH	GENE PATTON (82)
	AL SPANGLER (75)
	JEROME WALTON (43)
9TH	SONNY JACKSON (64)
	GEORGE STONE (62)
10TH	HARRY MACPHERSON (82)
11TH	JOEY MCLAUGHLIN (52)
	ANDY ASHBY (41)
	BLAINE BOYER (27)
12TH	MIKE PAGE (68)
13TH	JACK AKER (68)
	ROB BELLOIR (60)
14TH	PEPE FRIAS (60)
	EARL WILLIAMS (60)
	JOSE HERNANDEZ (39)
	TIM HUDSON (33)
15TH	JUNG KEUN BONG (28)
16TH	**TERRY PENDLETON** (48)
	JORGE VASQUEZ (30)
18TH	JOE TORRE (68)
21ST	DENIS MENKE (68)
	AL HRABOSKY (59)
22ND	BOB PORTER (49)
	GARY EAVE (45)
23RD	VIRGIL JESTER (81)
24TH	CLINT CONATSER (87)
	ETHAN BLACKABY (68)
25TH	BIFF POCOROBA (55)
26TH	PETE WARD (69)
	GREG COLBRUNN (39)
27TH	JOHN EDELMAN (73)
28TH	JERRY MADDOX (55)
	WILSON BETEMIT (28)
	CHAD PARONTO (33)
29TH	FELIX MANTILLA (74)
	TOMMY GREGG (45)
	SETH GREISINGER (33)
30TH	MICKEY MAHLER (56)
31ST	TERRY FOX (73)
	HANK SMALL (55)
	MIKE BIELECKI (49)

ChopTalk
THE OFFICIAL MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF THE ATLANTA BRAVES

SUBSCRIPTIONS
P.O. Box 80750
Conyers, Ga. 30013-8750
PHONE | 1-877-655-CHOP (2467)
WEB | Braves.com/choptalk

PUBLISHER
GARY CARUSO, President
Wonderdog Publishing, Inc.

EDITORIAL
EDITOR: Gary Caruso
COLUMNISTS: Jay Busbee, Skip Caray, Bobby Cox, Scott Diamond, Patty Rasmussen, Jo-Jo Reyes, Ken Rosenthal (FoxSports.com), Frank Wren
REPORTERS: Bill Ballew, Mark Bowman (MLB.com), Jay Busbee, Jon Cooper, Steve Fall, Ray Glier, Brian Knapp, Patty Rasmussen
PHOTOGRAPHERS: Paul Abell, Tom Priddy, Patty Rasmussen, Carlos Restrepo, Bill Setliff, Allison Shirreffs, Walter Victor, Rodger Wood
CARTOONIST: Johnny Sajem

PRODUCTION
ART DIRECTOR: Clark Odom

ADVERTISING
SALES:
Doug Campbell (770) 815-7506
David Haynes (404) 234-7960
FLORIDA SALES
Bill Francisco (727) 733-6970

PRINTER
Publisher's Press

SUBSCRIBER SERVICES
McMillen Communications

NEWSSTAND OPERATIONS
Curtis Circulation Company
Publishers Single Copy Sales Services

BUSINESS OPERATIONS
Rob Calcutta

CHANGE OF ADDRESS
Send address changes or corrections to: ChopTalk, P.O. Box 80750, Conyers, Ga. 30013-8750 or call 1-877-655-CHOP (2467) or visit braves.com/choptalk.

OFFICE OF PUBLICATION
12829 Trinity Dr.
Stafford, TX 77477-4214
PHONE 1-877-655-CHOP (2467)
E-MAIL Letters@ChopTalkonline.com

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY
It is the policy of this magazine and its publisher:
1. To contract with individuals on the basis of their qualifications and with assurance of equal opportunity and treatment,regardless of race, color, creed, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion, national origin or handicap.
2. To not knowingly accept any advertisement which implies any preference, limitation or discrimination based on race, color, creed, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion, national origin or handicap.

ATLANTA BRAVES STAFF
PUBLIC RELATIONS
BRAD HAINJE - Director of MediaRelations
BETH MARSHALL - Director of Public Relations
ANDY PRESSLEY - Publications Manager
Adam Liberman, Meagan Swingle, Adrienne Midgley

GARY CARUSO
EDITOR & PUBLISHER

SURVIVOR

WHEN IT COMES to total body mass, Tim Hudson is the smallest man on the Braves' roster. There are a few shorter players, but they're built stockier. Hudson is listed at 6-1, 170 pounds. He says he weighs 175. That's soaking wet and with weights in both hands.

After he left his June 12 start at Wrigley Field, Hudson probably didn't weigh 165. No one bothered weighing him, because they were too busy hooking him up to IV bags.

In spite of Hudson's strong 6 2/3 innings of work that day, allowing just one run to the Cubs, the Braves lost an excruciating decision, 3-2, in 11 innings. When they left Chicago after the game, they also left Hudson behind. Doctors wanted to keep him under observation after severe dehydration that required two bags of IV fluids.

"The last two innings, his hands were locking up," said Bobby Cox. "He had to keep bending them back with the other hand to open them up. When he came out, his whole body was curling up."

Hudson, the only member of the starting rotation who's been able to remain healthy, admitted he was scared.

"I started cramping in my forearms and fingers," he said. "Then the rest of my body started locking up - my feet, ankles, calves, everything. Then I started getting cramps in my chest, and that's what really got to me. I looked in the mirror, and I wasn't looking good."

That's when doctors hooked him up to an IV and took some blood work that told them Hudson was not fit for the team flight to Anaheim.

"I'm a little guy, but I sweat like I weigh 240," said Hudson, who inhales water, bananas and electrolyte pills for two days before starts. "I have to hydrate before games, and I thought I did enough this time... but I must not have. The only other time I cramped up this bad was in junior college."

Hudson said after doctors checked his blood in Chicago that they told him they should have given him a third bag of fluids, but he felt "fine" by the time he joined the team in California a day later.

At this writing, Chipper Jones and Brian McCann appeared to be "locks" to be on the National League All-Star Team for the July 15 game at Yankee Stadium. Hudson certainly should be there, as well. His 2.76 ERA ranked fifth in the league, and he was ninth in wins (7). That win total could easily be 11, if not for four no decisions resulting from lack of support.

"It's a shame what's happened to him the last two years - the way we've blown his games," said Cox. "He doesn't walk anybody and gets groundball after groundball. He ought to be at the All-Star Game."

One thing's for sure. Hudson's got an all-star heart. His overall mass may be the smallest on the roster, but his percentage of heart to body mass may lead the league.

"He's tough," said Cox.

In sports, that's the ultimate compliment.

When the Apollo 13 mission was falling apart, the NASA director told flight director Gene Kranz, played by Ed Harris in the movie of the same name, "This could be the worst disaster NASA's ever faced." Kranz responded, "With all due respect, sir, I believe this is gonna be our finest hour." Words of inspiration for a season on the brink, but not without hope.

This month we begin a season-long series on the career of Chipper Jones, who is taking a serious run at winning the NL batting title he narrowly missed a year ago. Chipper may be putting the exclamation point on a fantastic career that will rank as one of the best in history for a switch-hitter and most certainly will lead him someday to a ceremony in a picturesque little town in upstate New York.

Tim Hudson is a great starting pitcher, and once again, his wife, Kim Hudson, is proving she's a great relief pitcher. As she did last August, Kim fills in this month for Patty Rasmussen as our Beyond Baseball columnist. Patty will be back in that role next month.

THIS ISSUE OF CHOPTALK was mailed June 25. The August issue will be mailed July 24.

BEYOND BASEBALL

BY **KIM HUDSON**

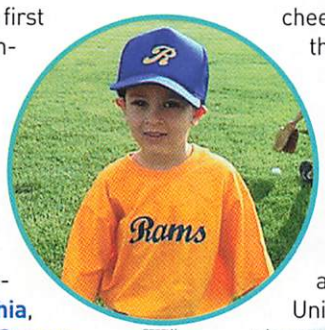
Jack and Annabel Ohman display their loyalty to Daddy (below, R) and join their mother, Allyson, in touring Atlanta.

TWIN 13s!

BEFORE BEING TRADED to the Braves from the Cubs, **Will Ohman** and his wife, **Allyson**, were not familiar with Atlanta. But Allyson and the children, two-year-old twins **Jack** and **Annabel**, have been taking full advantage of all things offered in Atlanta. The family recently enjoyed a trip to the World of Coca-Cola, where the twins tasted their first soft drink! The twins love Atlanta and especially enjoy going to daddy's games, playing at the Sky Field, running the bases on Sundays, and learning to do the tomahawk chop.

PHOTOS: SPECIAL

FIVE-YEAR-OLD CARTER CARLYLE (below), son of **Buddy Carlyle**, starred in his first organized baseball game in his hometown of Bellevue, Nebraska. Carter's team, the Bellevue Rams, is part of a "squirt ball" team, made up of boys ages five to eight. When asked if he wants to be a pitcher like his daddy, Carter said that he actually wants to be a third baseman like **Chipper Jones**. You can imagine his delight when he started his first game at third base, and in Chipper-like fashion, had two hits in two at-bats...



SPECIAL

The Braves' in-house barber is also a member of the bullpen. **Jeff Bennett** cuts hair for teammates and coaches and also keeps their facial hair neat and tidy. "I keep my clippers in my locker," said Bennett, who has cut hair on all the teams he's played for since entering pro ball. Among his satisfied "clients" are **Brian McCann**, **Chino Cadahia**, **Mark Kotsay**, **Tom Glavine**, **Mark Teixeira**, **Gregor Blanco** and **Martin Prado**. Bennett said **Mike Gonzalez** is one guy who doesn't need a barber. "He cuts his own hair - with scissors!" said Bennett in amazement...

John Smoltz's daughter, **Rachel**, 14, recently returned from a 10-day mission to Swaziland, South Africa. Rachel and many of her middle school classmates from King's Ridge Christian School worked in the homes of orphan-headed households supported by the New Hope Children's Centre. "I'm excited for her," said John. "It's been a life-changing experience."...

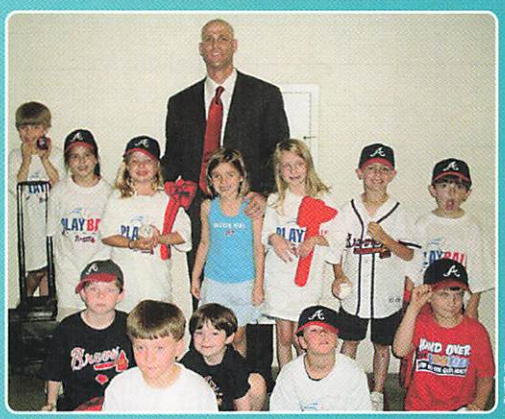
While visiting Atlanta recently, actress **Kirstie Alley** and her children, son **William**, 16, and daughter **Lillie**, 14, attended the May 24 Diamondbacks game. The family cheered enthusiastically for the Braves and stayed through the eighth inning, despite sitting in direct sunlight for the majority of the warm summer day...

Ashley McCann accompanied her husband, **Brian McCann**, to the wine tasting and presentation of the Braves Charity Wines, May 19, at the 755 Club at Turner Field. Ashley had a chance to meet the label artist, **Lauren Creedon**, a student at Harvard University in Boston and also a semi-pro baseball player in the North American Women's Baseball League. Lauren drew the three label portraits - McCann, **Tom Glavine** and **Chipper Jones**. All of the players' proceeds from the wine sales are donated to charity. The wine is on sale at Kroger, Wal-Mart and wine stores and restaurants in Georgia, South Carolina and North Carolina...

Tess Hudson celebrated her fourth birthday with all of her

DADDY'S OFFICE

KENNEDIE Hudson proudly took her first-grade class (R) at Landmark Christian School in Peachtree City on a field trip to watch the Braves play the San Diego Padres on May 8. Kennedie and her teachers, 13 classmates, and their parents enjoyed a visit and goody bags from the Tomahawk Girls, recognition on the big screen in center field, and a special visit from **Tim Hudson** after the game.



SPECIAL

"baseball buddies" at Turner Field during the game on May 3. The theme of the party was High School Musical, and the Family Room was expertly decorated before the game by Tess' dad, **Tim Hudson**, and outfielder **Matt Diaz**. Many of Tess' friends were in attendance, including **Grace** and **Sienna Kotsay**, who were all decked out in their High School Musical party attire!... Also celebrating birthdays in May were both **Ali** and **Elle Bennett**, daughters of **Jeff** and **Rachel Bennett**. Ali turned three on May 10, and Elle celebrated her first birthday on May 11...

Kelly Johnson and his wife, **Lauren**, celebrated his third-year anniversary in the major leagues on May 29 with lunch at a quaint Italian restaurant in Milwaukee...

Kim Hudson attended the American Idol finale on May 20 and 21 at the Nokia Theatre in Los Angeles. Kim was joined by **Pam Mecir**, a good friend and wife of **Jim Mecir**, a teammate of Tim's when he played for the Oakland Athletics...

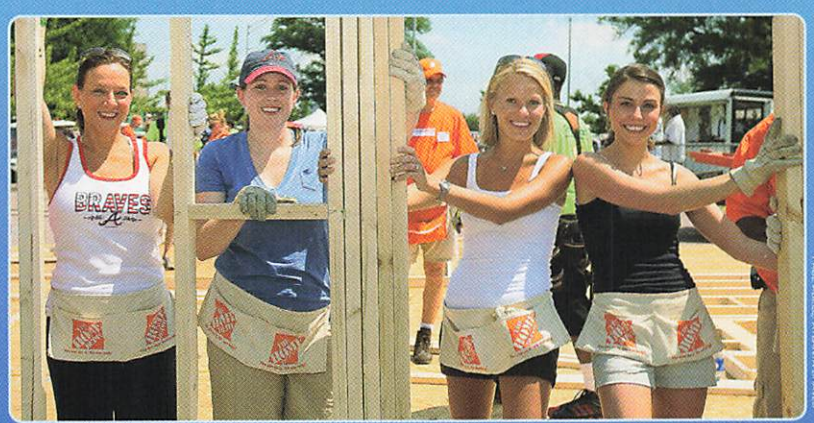
Jessica Carlyle, wife of **Buddy Carlyle**, hosted a "spa night" at the Turner Field Visiting Family Room. Guests were treated to mini-facials using Arbonne products administered by **Miranda Taylor**, an aesthetician at the Ritz-Carlton, Reynolds Plantation. Many wives, including **Lauren Johnson (Kelly)**, **Ginsey Boyer (Blaine)**, **Ronnie** and **Erin Snitker**, wife and daughter of third base coach **Brian Snitker**, **Rachel Bennett (Jeff)**, **Leslee Diaz (Matt)**, **Jenny Miller (Corky)**, **Ashley McCann (Brian)** and **Kara Resop (Chris)**, enjoyed refreshments and girl talk...

Brian Snitker and his wife, **Ronnie**, toasted the completion of the school year and excellent grades with dinner at The Capital Grill with their children, **Troy** and **Erin**. Troy plays baseball for South Georgia College, which advanced to the championship game in the 2008 Region 17 Georgia Junior College state tournament before losing. Congratulations to Troy, who was also named to the all-tournament team. Erin attends Georgia Baptist College of Nursing at Mercer University. She was recently awarded a scholarship through the Piedmont Nursing Scholars Program...

While their husbands took part in the Atlanta Braves Foundation Golf Classic, some lucky wives were treated to spa services at the Ritz-Carlton, Reynolds Plantation. Among the wives who spent the day off with some much-deserved pampering were **Allyson Ohman**, wife of **Will Ohman**; **Rachel Bennett (Jeff)**, **Ronnie Snitker (Brian)**, and **Gloria McDowell**, wife of pitching coach **Roger McDowell**...

Happy 30th birthday, **Leigh Teixeira**! To celebrate, Leigh and her twin brother enjoyed a suite at the Braves game together with their families. Leigh and husband **Mark** have also taken advantage of the few off-days and day games by sampling Atlanta-area restaurants, including Rathbun's Steakhouse, Aquanox and Chops...

Lauren Johnson (Kelly) participated in the Arthritis Walk held at Atlantic Station. The event raised over $235,000!



PAUL ABELL, ATLANTA BRAVES

Home builders (L-R) Ronnie Snitker, Leslee Diaz, Ginsey Boyer and Lauren Johnson pitch in to help build homes for Habitat for Humanity.

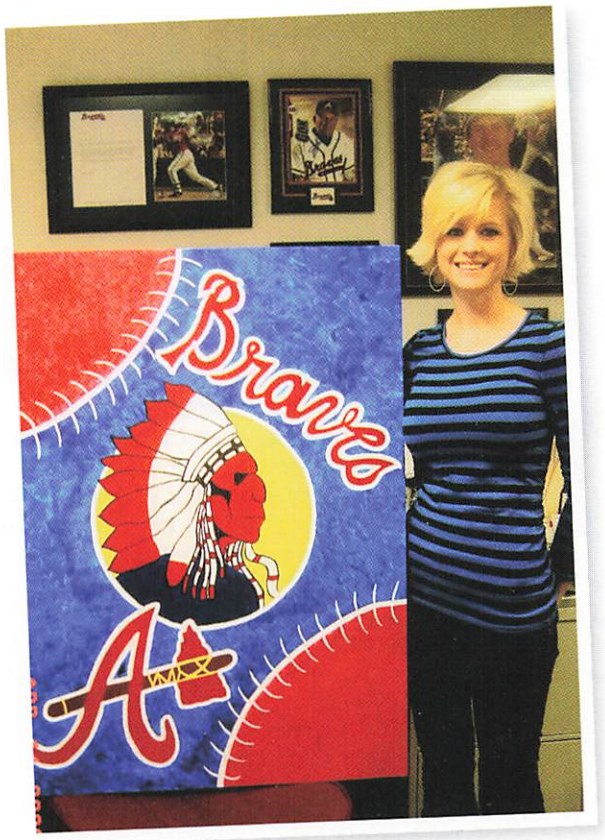
CONSTRUCTION ZONE

BRAVES WIVES, including **Leslee Diaz (Matt)**, **Ginsey Boyer (Blaine)**, **Ronnie Snitker (Brian)**, and **Lauren Johnson (Kelly)**, joined staff and volunteers from Atlanta Habitat for Humanity in helping to build walls to be used in four new homes throughout the Atlanta community. By the end of the year, over 1,000 homes will be constructed by Atlanta Habitat staff and volunteers.

TALKIN' CHOP

LETTERS & PHOTOS FROM OUR READERS

WHETHER YOU'RE HAVING FUN AT TURNER FIELD, EXPERIENCING A CLOSE ENCOUNTER WITH YOUR FAVORITE BRAVES PLAYER, OR JUST SHOWING OFF YOUR COLLECTION OF BRAVES STUFF OR TRYING ON YOUR NEW BRAVES SHIRT, WE WANT TO HEAR ABOUT IT AND SEE A PICTURE.



SPRING ENCOUNTER

While attending spring training, we met Kyle Davies (now with Kansas City) and Brian McCann. My daughter, Karen Kay, and grandson, Cory Kay, had a picture taken with them during an autograph signing. They were very kind to everyone at the session. Thanks, ChopTalk, for keeping us in touch with all the Braves.

REBA BEAGLES
Chickamauga, Ga.

BUDDY'S BUDDIES

We recently went to see the Braves play in Houston. We went early for autographs, and Buddy Carlyle signed and took pictures with us Friday and Saturday. We had such a great time. Thanks, Mr. Carlyle, and thanks, ChopTalk, for all the Braves info!

DAMON COOLEY FAMILY
DeRidder, La.

PAYBACK

My grandmother, Alta Brown, took me to Atlanta when I was 8 months old to see the Braves, and I've seen many more games with her over the past 24 years. This past March, my grandmother helped me have a beautiful wedding. As a return gift to her for the many trips to Atlanta and for the wedding, I painted this Braves keepsake to hang in her office.

ANGELA SELF AGNEW
Florence, Ala.

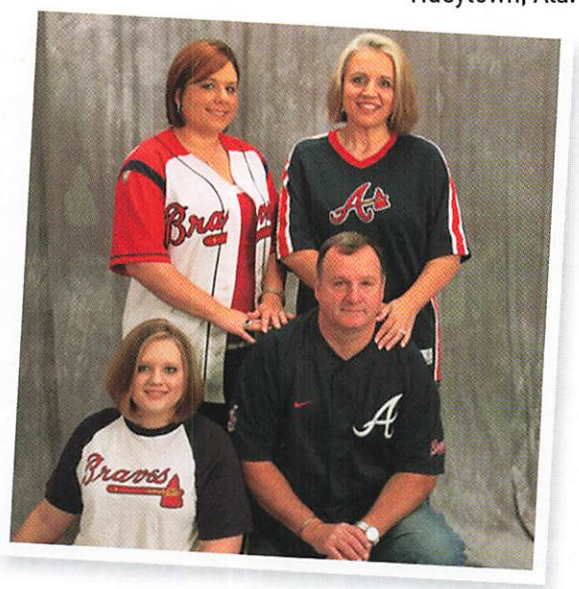
FAMILY AFFAIR

I'm a 48-year-old mother of two that has been a diehard Braves fan for more years than I care to admit. My friends and family think it's crazy. If someone calls me a "baseball fan," I immediately correct them. I am a Braves fan!

We have family traditions wrapped around the Braves - FanFest, Baseball 101, birthday celebrations, etc. Last year I gave up having facepaint for each game we attended. All it took was seeing myself on the video board to know that it was time to forego it.

I want to share the best Mother's Day present that I've ever received. My husband (Kenneth) and two daughters (Kelli, 25, and Bethany, 20) finally agreed to new family portraits.

DONNA COLE
Hueytown, Ala.



CHOPTALK AND THE ATLANTA BRAVES SUPPORT OUR TROOPS

HOT DOG

Our family loves baseball, and we're big Braves fans. My grandfather played in the Braves' farm system in the late 1950s, and my dad played baseball in college. I play first base and pitch on my Little League team. This is a picture of me with my new dog named "Chipper." Guess who he's named after!

DAVIS BRADY
Burlington, N.C.

HOLIDAY HUBBY

Recently my wife, Julie, said the words that any man would love to hear, "Honey, will you take me to a Braves game for my Mother's Day present?" So, the good husband I try to be, I agreed. I got tickets for the Saturday and Sunday games against the Reds the weekend before Mother's Day. Being a former batboy with the Greenville Braves in the mid '80s, I've had a lot of fun at the ballpark, but I must say that weekend was by far my best time. We had brunch in the 755 Club, met several former players, and enjoyed the game the way everyone should have the chance to do. The experience was so good I'm taking my 72-year-old dad to a game for Father's Day.

JOHN URSO
Simpsonville, S.C.

SHARE YOUR BRAVES FEVER!

WRITE TO US

Talkin' Chop c/o ChopTalk
P.O. Box 80750
Conyers, Ga. 30013-8750

Letters@ChopTalkonline.com

Letters and photos chosen for publication are subject to editing, and photos cannot be returned. Computer printouts of photos cannot be published. High-resolution files preferred. ChopTalk reserves the right to use letters and photos for promotional and advertising purposes.

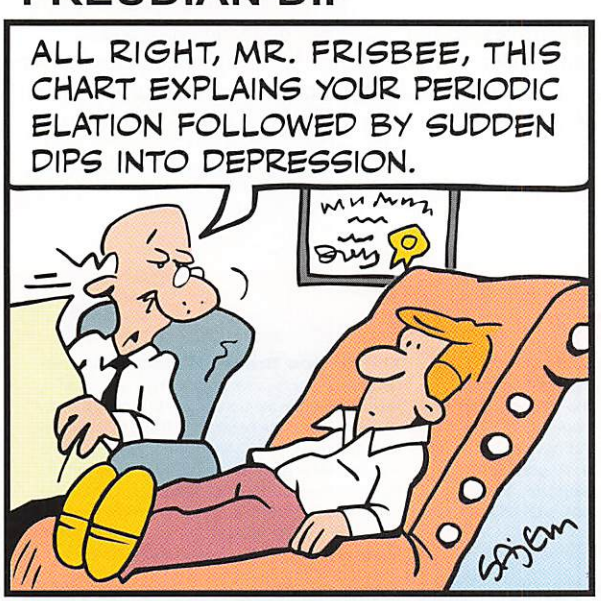
WRITE THE BRAVES

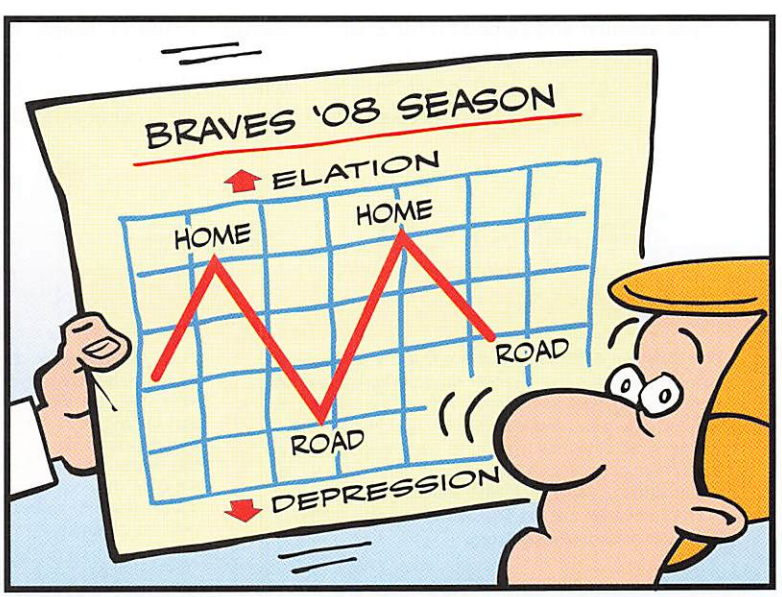
Atlanta Braves
P.O. Box 4064
Atlanta, Ga. 30302

For the Braves players, Bobby Cox, the coaches, broadcasters, or members of the front office.

If you request a response, be sure to include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Never send anything of value that you want returned. This is no guarantee of a reply.

FREUDIAN DIP





A WINE DRIVE TO LEFT FIELD FOR CHARITY

BY DENNIS M. BYRON JR.

AFTER MY DELIGHTFUL experience at the May 8 BusinessFan Special that I reported on last month, I couldn't turn down an invitation to another afternoon outing at Turner Field.

The occasion was a private tasting party to introduce wines named after, of all things, three of the more popular employees who work at 755 Hank Aaron Drive - Chipper Jones, Tom Glavine and Brian McCann.

The cool thing about this event on May 19 at the ritzy 755 (there's that number again) Club that crowns the left-field seats was that profits from the sale of Chipper Chardonnay, McCann Merlot, and the snazzy sounding Cabernet Glavingnon will be donated to the players' chosen charities.

It was eerily quiet when I arrived at Turner Field on this beautiful Monday when the Braves weren't scheduled to play. I'm used to the announcer's voice echoing through the loudspeaker, fans waiting to buy tickets, and kids by the busloads, wide-eyed and excited to see their favorite player win the game for the trusty home team. Then again, this was an exclusive event, accessible only to the invited that included a handful of lucky chums like me.

After walking into the lobby of The Home of The Braves, I was directed to the elevator that took me where the party commenced three stories above. It was a festive affair, populated by folks in business suits, blazers, slacks and dresses. I knew I should've worn my Easter Sunday suit!

People mingled and sipped on the charitable vino. Tables were set up to inform the minglers about the non-profit organizations benefiting from the wine sales. Three easels

CHARITY HOP SPORTS CONSULTING

displayed blow-ups of the artwork on the bottles. And uniformed servers passed around an assortment of finger food ranging from doughy pockets stuffed with pork to some unusual-looking chicken kabobs.

After shaking hands with some guests and heads of charities, I gravitated to the posters of the wine bottle designs brandishing the Braves stars. The three brilliant charcoal renderings consisted of a smiling Chipper, looking every bit like a .400 hitter, a pensive Glavine, set to paint the outside corner; and McCann gazing into the sky, living the dream of playing for the hometown team.

The artwork, coupled with the overall cause to benefit charities, should make these wines big sellers among the thousands of Braves fans and wine collectors.

The arrival of McCann and Jones caused a stir of excitement (future Hall-of-Famer Glavine couldn't make it). The Braves' catcher wore jeans, a polo shirt and sneaks, while the All-Star hot cornerman had on an Oxford shirt and boots. My kind of guys!

The crowd quieted as the introductions were made, and then McCann and Jones sat in director's chairs (L) and spoke passionately - well, there was some humor, too - about the foundations they represent (the Rally Foundation and the Miracle League, respectively).

Chipper, who admitted that he wasn't really a Chardonnay guy, teased McCann, saying he looked better on the bottle than in person. The Bud Light-loving McCann joined the fun, inducing laughter with his admiration of Glavine's fancy wine name compared to the more straightforward McCann Merlot.

However, even with the fun and games, the mission was strong and consistent. Wine aficionados or not, these players took their day off before a grueling doubleheader against the Mets to support wondrous causes.

I finally got a chance to sample all of the wines, which turned out to be pretty good and reasonably priced, too, at about 13 bucks a bottle. Sipping the Glavingnon (which supports CURE Childhood Cancer), I gave the wine a swirl, a deep whiff, took a sip, swished it around in my mouth, and made a hearty swallow.

Just right to accompany a medium rare filet mignon with caramelized onions... But given the setting, I couldn't help but wonder how it would go with a hot dog and onion rings!

For more information, check out: charitywines.com; miracleleague.com; rallyfoundation.org; and curechildhoodcancer.org. Look for the wine in Atlanta-area supermarkets and restaurants, or call 1-978-297-5477 to order.

FAN CLUBS

BRAVES 400 CLUB

The Braves 400 Club is the official fan club of the Atlanta Braves. It is a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting baseball at all levels. Annual membership is $25 and includes a newsletter and the opportunity to participate in activities such as road trips, luncheons, the annual banquet, and charitable events. Send payment to: Braves 400 Club, P.O. Box 7689, Atlanta, Ga. 30309. For more information, call the organization's hotline at (770) 416-4539 or visit braves400.org.

MILWAUKEE BRAVES HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

The Milwaukee Braves Historical Association is a non-profit organization that promotes the memory of the Milwaukee Braves (1953-65). Annual membership is $25 and includes a newsletter. Send payment to: Milwaukee Braves Historical Association, 6700 N. Range Line Rd., Glendale, Wisc. 53209. For information, call (414) 347-1212 or visit 57braves.com.

BOSTON BRAVES HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

The Boston Braves Historical Association is a non-profit organization dedicated to keeping alive the memory of the Braves in the city where the franchise began in 1871 and that it represented through 1952. Annual membership is $15 and includes a newsletter. Send payment to: Boston Braves Historical Association, P.O. Box 5668, Marlboro, Mass. 01752. For more information, call (508) 485-1423 or visit Bostonbraves.com. **Oct. 12** - Annual reunion/dinner.

ORDER TODAY! 1-800-433-BRAVES

CALL MON-FRI
8:30 AM-6:00 PM

WE'VE OUTFITTED THE BRAVES. WE CAN DO THE SAME FOR ~~YOU~~ Lady Braves.

Purchase your Lady Braves Merchandise along with Braves t-shirts, jerseys, jackets, caps and more for every Braves fan. Call the Braves Catalog at 1-800-433-BRAVES, or visit the Braves Clubhouse Store at CNN Center.

$20 1966 SKINNY TEE
100% cotton. Junior sizes: S, M, L, XL, XXL. #3088

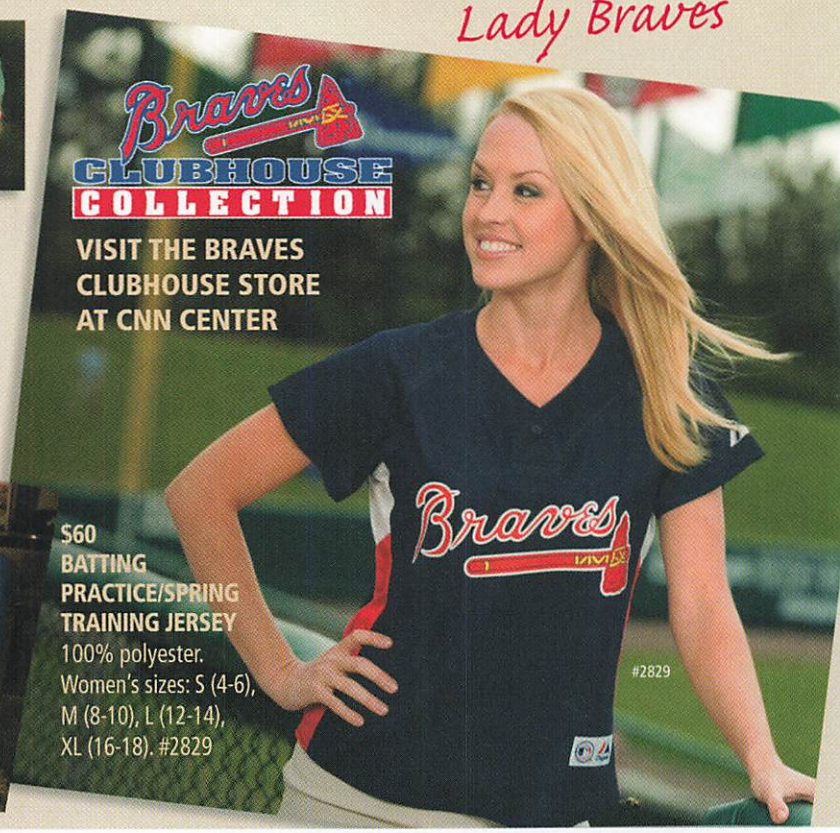
$22 PLAYER NAME-NUMBER TEE
100% cotton.
Women's sizes: XS, S, M, L.
#1192 C. Jones, #1196 Francoeur

$18 MOSS GARMENT WASHED
Adjustable. #509

$20 FLOWER SKINNY TEE
100% cotton. Junior sizes: S, M, L, XL. #4494

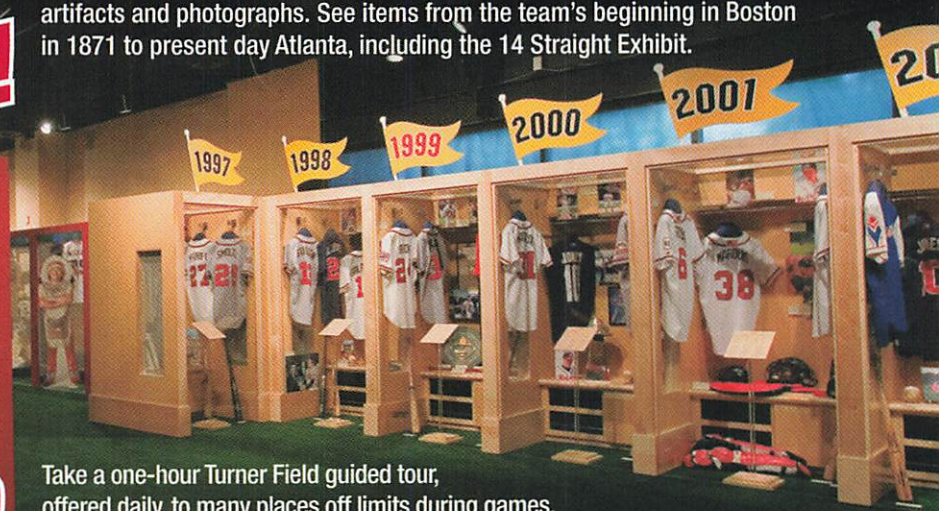
#3088

#1192

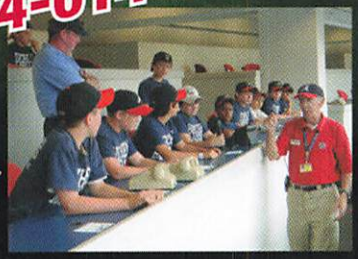


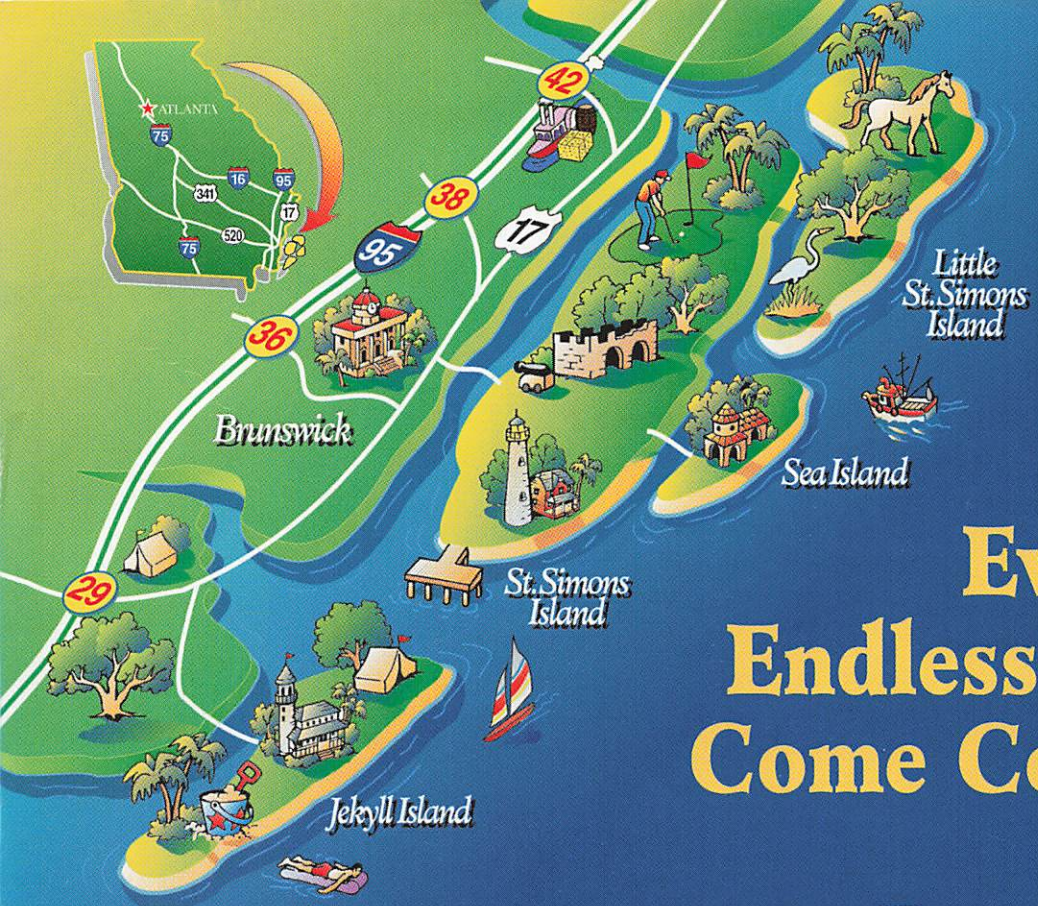
$60 BATTING PRACTICE/SPRING TRAINING JERSEY
100% polyester.
Women's sizes: S (4-6), M (8-10), L (12-14), XL (16-18). #2829

Visit the Braves Museum at AISLE 134 and view more than 600 Braves artifacts and photographs. See items from the team's beginning in Boston in 1871 to present day Atlanta, including the 14 Straight Exhibit.



Take a one-hour Turner Field guided tour, offered daily, to many places off limits during games. Group and school tours are offered year-round, including specialized tours on the subjects of math, social studies, art and careers in sports. Call 404-614-2311.





Every Season, Endless Reasons To Come Coast Awhile, Atlanta!

Brunswick & The Golden Isles of Georgia. Unhurried. Unspoiled. Unmatched for countless diversions and pleasures. Vast marshlands, winding rivers, and ribbon-smooth beaches. Centuries-old oaks draped in moss. The stunning beauty of this corner of Georgia is legendary.

History is alive here. The flags of five nations have fluttered in these salt breezes marking a diverse heritage that lingers today. An English fort, antebellum plantation ruins, Victorian homes–400 years of history. And getting better with age.

Recreation for every taste and tempo. Miles of fairways fronting 216 holes of golf, acres of tennis courts. Plus casino/cruise ship, sport fishing, boating, sailing and endless bike paths offering discoveries around every bend.

Mainland Brunswick greets with quaint charm. The architecture of Old Town, fleets of shrimp boats along its waterfront, antique shops. And so much more.

Cross the fabled Marshes of Glynn and behold The Golden Isles. St. Simons Island, Sea Island, Little St. Simons Island and Jekyll Island. Beaches so perfect for swimming, strolling, shelling, sunning. A mecca for shoppers, pure paradise for golf and tennis lovers. Historic sites by the dozens, fresh seafood by the pound. And accommodations of every description from budget to luxury to camping and rental cottages.

Where I-95 bends toward the sea, pull off and coast awhile. The hospitality, like the climate, welcomes year-round. Brunswick & The Golden Isles. Enjoy them each. Explore them all.

For a free vacation planning guide: 1-800-933-COAST (2627)

BRUNSWICK AND THE GOLDEN ISLES OF GEORGIA

ST. SIMONS ISLAND • SEA ISLAND
LITTLE ST. SIMONS ISLAND • JEKYLL ISLAND

BGICVB.COM